
ISSUE 061: Draw Nigh Unto Me Part 59

Issued: 29th May 2018

Defaced - Week 51

My Brother John - A Living Stone (Part Four)

The Marvelous Rising of a Rejected Stone

Easter Sunday Resource by John Piper Topic: Glorification

Ref: <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/the-marvelous-rising-of-a-rejected-stone>

Scripture: Matthew 21:42

**The very stone which the builders rejected
has become the head of the corner;
this was the Lord's doing,
and it is marvellous in our eyes.**

Last fall Charles Colson was in India.

As usual, the crowds he spoke to wanted to hear the testimony of this Watergate criminal turned prison evangelist.

Here's the way he described his experience in India:

When I was in India last fall, I had many opportunities to tell what Christ has done in my life.

The thousands of faces in those predominantly Hindu crowds would nod and smile as I shared my experience.

Hindus believe all roads lead to God—if Jesus was my guru, that was fine.

They all had their gurus, too.

But when I spoke of the reason for my faith, the resurrection of Christ, the nods would stop.

People's expressions changed, and they listened intently.

**The fact of the Resurrection demands a choice, one that reduces all other religions to mere philosophies.
(Christianity Today, March 21, 1986, p. 72)**

The Shocking, Objective Resurrection

Christianity socks you between the eyes because it is a religion that says: The really marvellous things in life are not the feelings of the heart but the facts of history.

There is a world of difference between a subjective religious disposition and an objective resurrection from the dead.

Put yourself in Athens 25 years after the death of Jesus.

You are a religious pluralist.

You love to discuss religion.

You love to hear about the religious experience of people from all over the world.

It's fascinating.

Sometimes you even learn something to incorporate into your own life to help you get along better.

What If Paul Preached Religious Experience Only?

Then one day comes a man named Paul to the Areopagus and joins in the discussions.

You ask him about his religion.

Suppose he said,

"I worship Jesus Christ. He was a Jewish teacher and wonder-worker.

He lived in Palestine 25 years ago and taught a way of love and truth.

His wisdom was unsurpassed.

Even in his dying he never gave in to the lower instincts of anger and revenge.

His memory is very powerful.

His teachings linger on in his followers.

His example can have a tremendous influence in your life if you meditate on what he did and said."

Period. That's all.

What would the response have been?

Tolerance. Benign interest, perhaps.

Nods and smiles of respect. Paul has his guru.

The Athenians have their gurus.

If it works for you, fine.

You have your inner experience.

I have mine.

What If Paul Preached the Resurrection as Historical Truth?

But what if he had said (which he did in fact) "The God who made the world and everything in it . . . commands all men everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and say, in Acts 17:31!), of this he has given assurance to all men by raising him from the dead"?

Well, that is not acceptable in a polite, respectful dialogue about religious experience.

Discussions about the relative value of religious experience and declarations about someone's resurrection from the dead are just not in the same category.

That's why the Hindus stopped nodding at Charles Colson.

That's why the Athenians mocked.

That's why Christianity is offensively unique in a pluralistic age.

For us, everything hangs on a marvellous fact in history, not a marvellous feeling in the heart.

Therefore, I want to direct your attention to four marvellous facts in Matthew 21:42.

We will approach it like this.

We will read a word from Jesus.

Then we will read its interpretation by the Apostle Peter.

Then we will fix our gaze on four marvellous things in Jesus' word.

Jesus' Word in Matthew 21:42

The word of the Lord is found in Matthew 21:42 at the end of the parable of the wicked tenants.

The owner of the vineyard had sent servants to get fruit from the tenants.

They had beaten some and killed others.

Then he sent his son.

But him, too, they cast out and killed.

The meaning is that God owns the vineyard of Israel.

It is supposed to bear the fruit of worship and obedience.

He has sent prophets and wise men to gather this fruit.

And finally he sent his Son.

But the leaders of Israel rebel.

They will give no fruit.

And they kill the Son of God.

Then comes our text in verse 42:

Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the scriptures: 'The very stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?'"

Peter's Interpretation in Acts 4:8–12

It seems obvious to you, I am sure, what this refers to, but let's go straight to the interpretation of the Apostle Peter in Acts 4:8–12.

Peter and John had been arrested for causing a stir by healing a man and teaching about the resurrection of Jesus from the dead (4:2–3).

The next day the Jewish leaders (the very ones who had condemned Jesus some months earlier) asked them by what power they were acting.

Peter answers, and his answer is an interpretation of Jesus' word about the rejected stone.

Starting at the end of verse 8:

Rulers of the people and elders, if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

This is the stone which was rejected by you builders, but which has become the head of the corner.

to a cripple, by what means this man has been healed, be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by him this man is standing before you well.

Notice Peter's interpretation, one part at a time.

Verse 10: the stone is Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

Verse 8: the builders are the rulers of the people and elders.

Verse 10: the rejection of the stone was the crucifixion of Jesus.

Verse 10: the elevation of the stone to the head of the corner was the resurrection of Jesus.

Verse 12: the implication of this new position at the head is that there is salvation in no other.

This is the same point Paul made at the Areopagus: the resurrection declares that Jesus is the Son of God in power; all must repent from other gods and seek salvation in him alone.

ISSUE 062: Draw Nigh Unto Me Part 60

Issued: 5th Jun 2018

Defaced - Week 52

My Brother John - A Living Stone (Part Five)

Four Marvellous Facts About Jesus' Word**Part 2: Easter Sunday Resource by John Piper Topic: Glorification****Ref: <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/the-marvelous-rising-of-a-rejected-stone>*****That is Peter's interpretation of the word of Jesus in Matthew 21:42.******Now we will be able on the basis of this interpretation to go back to Jesus' word and fix our gaze on four marvellous facts.*****1. Jesus' Prediction*****First, let us marvel at the fact that Jesus predicts his own resurrection before it happens.******He had done this before this moment, and he would do it again.******Sometimes he made it plain, for example, when he said:******"After I am raised up I will go before you into Galilee"******(Mark 14:28; cf. Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:34; 14:25).******But usually he spoke of it indirectly, for example, when he said:******"Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up"******(John 2:19; Mark 14:58; 15:29; Matthew 26:61);******or:******"No sign will be give to this generation except the sign of Jonah" (Matthew 16:4; 12:39; cf. 12:41).******He often spoke only for those who had ears to hear.******The reason I point out the fact that Jesus predicted his own resurrection is to sow a seed in your mind that I don't have time to develop today.******The seed is simply that it is impossible to admire Jesus as a wise and loving teacher while rejecting him as your risen and living Master.******It's impossible because if he isn't the risen Master, then he was deluded or deceptive in his life and teaching and so shouldn't be admired.******He built his life around a self-understanding that included his own resurrection.******If he didn't rise, he is to be pitied as a teacher not admired.******But someone may say, "Aren't you assuming that he said everything the Gospels said that he did?"******Wouldn't the sceptic who rejects the resurrection but admires Jesus say that the early church made up those sayings to make it look like Jesus expected his own resurrection?"******The answer to that question is that no matter how much of the Gospels you try to strip away as later additions, you never wind up with a mere man.******His claims to authority and power are so woven through his words and deeds that critics are dreaming when they think they can peel the onion of supernatural tradition down to the natural core of a mere man.******He vanishes.******Because a mere, natural man named Jesus with a noble view of love never existed.******The Jesus of history knew he was no ordinary man, and we do well to marvel that part of his self-understanding was the assurance that he would rise from the dead.******So we should marvel that Jesus predicted his resurrection before it happened.*****2. The Builders' Blindness*****Second, let us marvel at the blindness of the builders.***

"The very stone that the builders rejected has become the head of the corner."

It is an amazing thing that the people who should know stones best did not recognise the best stone.

Mark 6:6 says, "Jesus marvelled because of their unbelief."

He said to Nicodemus, one of the "builders":

"Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand this?"

Jesus was astonished at the blindness of those who should have been the first to recognise him from their knowledge of the Old Testament.

A Lesson for Today About "Builders" and Rejection

And while we marvel at this let us learn a lesson.

Even today there is no guarantee that the "builders"—the religious experts, the university theologians, the clergy—will recognise the stone.

Two years ago a sixty year old theology professor at the University of Leeds in England was appointed Bishop of Durham.

In the process he announced that the resurrection of Jesus was a "conjuring trick with bones."

So here is a "builder" who still is rejecting the stone.

Why should we be vigilant about such things in our own churches and colleges and seminaries?

Two Reasons to Be Vigilant Against Such Rejection

One is that the bishop's words reached Moslems in Sri Lanka, halfway around the world.

Immediately they began aggressive visitation campaigns to Christians saying that there is no reason for conflict any more since Christians and Moslems both agree now that Jesus was merely a prophet to be honoured, not the Son of God to be worshipped.

One Anglican rector in Sri Lanka said,

"They are killing us with our bishop's own words."

The "builders" are still rejecting the cornerstone, and in many churches, the walls and the mission are in disarray.

The other reason for us to be vigilant as we marvel at the blindness of the builders is something that Iain Murray said recently.

He said that the uproar over the Jenkins [Bishop of Durham] affair is puzzling since he has been teaching these things when preparing ministers in the university for years and probably doing more harm there than he can do now that he is a public figure and his cards are on the table.

So let us marvel at the blindness of the builders.

And let us learn that academic stature has never been a guarantee of religious insight.

And let us be vigilant and examine our church leaders—our pastors, our deacons, our board members, our Sunday School teachers—let us examine them carefully to see if they know and accept the stone which many builders have rejected.

3. The Rejected Stone Now the Head Stone

Third, let us marvel that the stone which is now at the head of the corner is the very stone that was once rejected.

A Real Man Reigning at God's Right Hand

Or, to take the imagery away, we must marvel that it is a real man who now reigns at the right hand of God.

Yes, he is more than a man.

He is the Son of God in power.

But the astonishing thing that we gaze at now is this: God the Son came into the world and clothed himself with a human nature in order to die for sinners like you and me.

A divine nature and a human nature came together in one Person.

And when that Person rose from the dead and ascended into heaven to take his place as the Head of the church and the King of the world, at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, it was a man who went into heaven.

He was one of us.

He is the same man reigning in heaven today who ate and drank and taught and healed and suffered on earth.

The very stone which the builders rejected, THIS one is now head of the corner.

In Luke 24:36–43 the risen Christ appeared to the apostles.

They were so amazed that they thought they were seeing a ghost.

So Jesus says,

Why are you troubled, and why do questions rise in your hearts?

See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see that I have.

And while they still disbelieved for joy, and marvelled, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?"

And they gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate before them.

ISSUE 063: Draw Nigh Unto Me Part 61

Issued: 12th Jun 2018

Defaced - Week 53

My Brother John - A Living Stone (Part Six)

Good News for Now and for Later

The risen Christ who reigns in heaven today and intercedes for us with the Father is a rejected stone!

He has flesh and bones!

He is one of us.

And this truth contains good news for now and good news for later.

For now it means this:

We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sinning.

Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:15–16)

For he too is a rejected stone with pierced hands and flesh and bone!

But not only that.

This truth is also good news for the future.

Get every ethereal, ghost-like conception of the coming kingdom out of your head.

The God-man is not going to rule over invisible spirits and ghosts.

"If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies."

We will eat broiled fish in the kingdom!

We will hold it in our physical hands and stand on our feet.

And there will be no more wheelchairs or crutches or cancer or paralysis or leukaemia or allergies or arthritis any more.

For we will bear the image of the Son of God, and we will see him and touch him and marvel at him forever and ever, because the divine stone which is now at the head of the corner is the very same human stone that was once rejected.

4. What It Means to Be the Head of the Corner

**Fourth, let us marvel at
WHAT IT MEANS TO BE THE HEAD OF THE CORNER.**

**Paul saw it perhaps more clearly than anyone, and said,
God raised him from the dead and made him sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come; and he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things. (Ephesians 1:20–22)**

**So that Jesus could say,
All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. (Matthew 28:18)**

**And Paul could preach in Athens with unwavering authority:
God has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all men by raising him from the dead. (Acts 17:31)**

Therefore (as we return to Peter's interpretation of our text), "There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

O do not be like the builders this morning!

Do not reject Jesus Christ.

Do not stumble over this rejected stone.

The very stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner.

This is the Lord's doing and may it be marvellous in your eyes. Amen.

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My Brother John - A Living Stone [Summation]

After all that we have recently studied let me now come to summation regarding where it all began.

Five weeks ago, I shared that on the morning I was to prepare Issue 58 I had awoken with memories of my recently departed Brother John and the words 'the rejected living stones' heavily on my mind.

Firstly, I shared about my Brother John & the 22 years we spent firmly united in EIDO & discussions on the rejections we could not help but see within the Church & Body of Christ, including ourselves.

Then followed the 'Got Questions' Article "What does it mean that Jesus and believers are living stones?"

Now we have just completed here a further article being John Piper's 'The Marvellous Rising of a Rejected Stone' which of course was Jesus.

Let us now turn attention back to what was continually going through my mind as I awoke that morning.

Swirling through my mind were thoughts of my Brother John together with a single statement: 'the rejected living stones'.

What could this possibly mean, for was it not Jesus who became a rejected stone after the builder's rejected him?

They should have recognised who He was through the scriptures they taught & supposedly upheld.

Through their ignorance, the Will of God was done in earth & Jesus through His Resurrection became the cornerstone of the Spiritual Temple.

A Temple to be built with the Living Stones He Could Now Gather in Himself as the One Body Of Christ, with Him the Head.

Those builders that rejected that 'living stone' were the leaders & elders of the world & the Church.

But how can we now, having been made Living Stones in Christ, possibly be rejected anymore?

Near the end of Issue 61 in John Piper's Article, he summed up Apostle Peter's interpretation of Acts 4:8-12, one part at a time.

Let us look at that again, now comparing aspects of us the Living Stones to the Rejected Stone, Jesus, to see what it brings forth to us.

**1. Verse 10: the [Living yet Rejected] stone is Jesus Christ of Nazareth.
The Living Stones: are All True Believers in Christ**

**2. Verse 8: the builders are the rulers of the people and elders.
The Living Stones: the One Builder is Jesus Christ The Son of God the Head of The Church.**

**3. Verse 10: the rejection of the stone was the crucifixion of Jesus.
The Living Stones: under rejection become bound to Christ as inevitably as Jesus was to Calvary's Tree.**

**4. Verse 10: the elevation of the stone to the head of the corner was the resurrection of Jesus.
The Living Stones: the elevating gain of wisdom & revelation in the knowledge of him [Eph 1:17] lifts us through the natural resistance to the death of self.**

**5. Verse 12: the implication of this new position at the head is that there is salvation in no other.
The Living Stones: the implication of this new position in Christ, the Head of our One Body is ever increasing Conscious Awareness of God, His Kingdom & True Unity, the growing evidence in us of things not yet seen. [Hebrews 11:1]**

Spiritual Truth is that we did not choose Jesus, He chose us, so it's impossible for Him to reject us from the Temple He Is, Christ the Son of God.

The words I received were referring to 'the rejected living stones'.

So is it at all possible that a Living Stone could, in fact, ever truthfully be rejected?

The answer is, that if it was possible for Jesus to be rejected, being both the Son of Man & A Living Stone, then not only is it possible but certain.

For it was the leaders of this world, along with the elders of the Church & the 'world' still in them, that conspired to bring about the Death of Jesus.

Every one of us has already experienced the rejection of the Living Stone we are in Him, in an absolute plethora of ways in every aspect of our lives, not excluding but sometimes more from within the Church.

I do not need to elaborate further for each one of us know in our hearts & minds of what I speak.

Now my Brother John, like all of us, experienced the same sense of rejection in many areas in life & the Church & felt compassion to others that he saw suffering the same.

In all our discussions over those early years, we never did come to any clear answer except for a revelation from God that none of it was news to Him.

So we realised He was allowing it, for Purposes Known Only To Him, so let us merely Trust in Him that He held the Answer & it was for us to guard our own hearts.

Ironically, it was in the unexpected passing of my Brother John to Glory that the Lord has magnified The Truth.

No matter what I had observed as the repercussions upon my Brother John's life from all the many forms of rejection, he had experienced in life, both out & in Christ, his physical death & the lead up to it, brought with it something startling.

The Peace & Strength of Christ within him merely washed away a million questions we all have of God, to reveal that despite it all my Brother John & ALL who are in Christ are Living Stones.

The world may reject us, but Jesus Christ never will!

John went in Peace as a Living Testimony to The Truth & left many with increased evidence of things not yet seen.

Amen. All Glory to God for the Message He has left in taking my Brother John Home!

ISSUE 064: Draw Nigh Unto Me Part 62

Issued: 19th Jun 2018

Defaced - Week 54

God's Coming Spiritual Revolution

In that moment of First Belief, I was captured by the inexplicable phenomenon that encompasses the initial evidence of things not yet seen that the now inward Presence Of Christ was proclaiming to my heart.

In hindsight, I now see that hand in hand with this new found faith a subconscious sense of pending imminency developed in me producing an indistinct awareness of spiritual vigour & desire to seek.

I believe the Lord used this undergirding realisation to open me widely to quickly educate, motivate & inspire me into position for receiving His Call to the EIDO Vision on Friday the 1st June 1990 in the 79th week of my conversion to Christ.

I have found in researching as I was writing this, that indeed the word imminence Holy Spirit had brought to me is used to describe the Second Coming of Jesus Christ for His Church & to declare that it is next on the prophetic program of God.

Two months back I shared an article by David Mathis:

"Are We Living in the Last Days".

Ref: <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/are-we-living-in-the-last-days>

In that article, David wrote:

"After his perfect life, sacrificial death for us, resurrection from the grave, and ascension to heaven to pour out his Spirit on his church, the next major movement in the history of the world is the second coming of Christ.

In the church age, we Christians have no definite unfulfilled list of events which must transpire before his return.

What the Bible promises will happen at the end is already happening, in significant measure, around the world today — and has been happening, in some sense, since the earliest days of the church.

And yet we have no firm, certain list of unfulfilled conditions about which Jesus could not surprise us.

His coming is the next big thing and could happen at any moment.

That's what the New Testament means when it says his return is near."

I share David's belief that the Last Days cover the entire period between the First & Second Coming of Jesus & is the very reason why I felt that sense of imminency from the moment of my rebirth.

I further believe that if we do not already possess the revelation of it in our hearts, then the acceptance of it to our mind alone is capable of producing a more profound broader perspective to our walk in God.

From its very birth in me, I have known in my heart that EIDO is an end time Call & Ministry & further that it's but one part of the overall final assault in God's Divine Plan & Purpose for the last days to usher in the Return of Jesus Christ.

I would point out here that I have also been fully aware that the end of the work of the Spirit of EIDO will come generations after me.

We casually refer to either the Last Days or the End Days or End Times as the same thing, but are they?

In my belief, the answer can be both yes or no depending on the perspective from which you are speaking.

Let me refer again to a couple of things David said in his article that I believe point out the importance of understanding the difference.

Quote 1: "In the church age, we Christians have no definite unfulfilled list of events which must transpire before his return."

There is a Church Age because in His physical absence we are His Church, our faith witnessing to His Spiritual Reality while His Second Coming shall affirm it to all the earth, meaning it has a beginning & an end & is not dependent on our 'works'.

Our faith, given to us by God, is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen [Heb. 11.1] that founded His Church for the remembrance of Him only during His physical absence from us.

Quote 2: "What the Bible promises will happen at the end is already happening, in significant measure, around the world today."

I think you would all agree that we the Church today are living through a time like never before that conspicuously points to Biblically recorded signs of the beginning of the end time leading to the very end days of the Church Age.

A real revelation of this will embody a shift in the foundations of how you walk in Christ as a deeper understanding of the season God has you in promotes imminency which in turn generates submissive obedience.

Imminency primarily expresses that something important is likely to happen & could do so without delay, while it may not be necessarily immediate or soon, it is next on the agenda so to speak & may occur at any time.

Submissive obedience then generates out of imminency in the same sense as we obey a command far more quickly with a realisation of inevitable pain or loss is coming rather than when we are free to respond when we are ready.

In light of such, my EIDO journey began as I attended my first Sunday Services after being born again at home on the previous Tuesday.

It was to be in the Night Service that the Lord first laid Uganda on my heart as we listened to a brother speaking of his visit there.

Then seven weeks later the Lord caused both my wife & I to simultaneously announce to each other that "we are going to Uganda."

It was to be some 59 weeks later I heard the almost audible Voice of God Command me to "Go to Uganda in October".

I can humbly tell you that if we could always Hear That Voice our struggles with ourselves would be over, consumed in submissive obedience I am sure.

Some 15 weeks after that, while I was in the midst of my preparation of going, I received the EIDO Vision on 1st June 1990.

First I saw a cloudy sky & one after another four letters carved out of massive stones popped out before the clouds: E ... I...D...O & when in my heart I wondered what it meant I heard Evangelical Inspiration Directed Overseas.

Then I heard the following:

"I will cause you to form an organisation that will be instrumental in moving men, women & children of great faith, both black & white from nation to nation".

Important Note: 'moving' in this instance is meant in the sense of motivating or inspiring by mobilising mixed groups through the EIDO Anointing To See & To Know.

It was further impressed upon me that the Spirit Anointing of EIDO would be one designated to educate, motivate & inspire the True Church to higher depths of wisdom & revelation in the knowledge of him designed to release the shackles that have previously kept such clarity bound.

Then I was given the scripture of Revelation 21:1

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea"

It was to be some 15 years later before I discovered that the Greek word for 'saw' in the above scripture is, in fact, the word 'eido' meaning To See & To Know.

From there the Lord has led me by various means To See & To Know in my heart that:

- **The Mid North of South Australia is the Spiritual Heartland of Australia the borders of which He had designated through a Vision He had previously given to my then Pastor.**
- **One day I was led to draw lines from the northernmost to the southernmost points, as well as the east and the west of the designated area on an old touring roadmap being the only map I had. To my absolute surprise, the lines transected each other at a point called Mount Zion which I found does, in fact, exist there but not indicated on most maps.**
- **That Port Pirie is the Western Gateway & in a Vision given simultaneously to myself & my then Pastor, as we were praying together in my home, revealed a gigantic golden angel towering over Australia. He was holding an enormous sword high above his head with both hands, his legs straddling both sides of a large area beyond the northernmost point of the Mid North.**
- **To go to Uganda carrying the message of EIDO, believing that by the Power of the EIDO Anointing He would awaken & establish the fullness of it there. For what He would raise up in East Africa is to return like a 'boomerang' to the Mid North Spiritual Heartland of Australia to fulfil its Destiny in Him.**
- **All to be part of the third & final great Spiritual Missionary Movement which is to come out of Africa to the western world [the first two being, of course, the Coastal & Inland Missionary Movements that first brought the Gospel to places such as Africa.]**
- **In more recent years I was given a Vision not long after discovering Burundi is known as the Heart of Africa. It was of a mighty wave rising in the eastern half of East Africa & pushing toward Burundi to then turn upon itself in great power & flow back on itself toward Australia as if a vast Spiritual Tsunami.**
- **In later years I was given a Vision of that same angel's sword now laid right across the Mid North with the tip at his feet & the handle at the southernmost point. Then, it was as if an unseen powerful yet gentle wave came from the west under the whole sword & started to lift it. As it began to be lifted up by this invisible force its point pivoted in the ground before the angel in the north & then the sword began to rise up from the southern end in one constant controlled motion until the hilt of the sword came into the angel's open hands.**
- **Grasping it with both hands, he then brought it up to the right side of his head & in one forcefully controlled motion swept it entirely to his left cutting the aorta of the Spiritual Heartland of Australia in the process. Then I saw blood pulsing out violently in a continuous flow to all four corners of the earth.**

So after many years of receiving the pieces of the 'jigsaw' I will attempt to concisely describe what I see the EIDO Vision is.

That in Australia, being the Great Southland of the Holy Spirit, the Mid North Area of South Australia is it's Spiritual Heartland, at the top of which stands a huge angel & his sword has been laid down across the Mid North Area as a seal awaiting the Spiritual Movement Ordained of God that is to be raised up in East Africa which will in turn cause a Spiritual Wave to backwash to Australia lifting the sword back into the angels hands at which time he will slash the aorta to release the anointing to flow into unity with other such God Appointed Spiritual Movements to form the final assault to usher in the end days of the Church Age by bringing the True Body of Christ together in oneness of heart to a level of wisdom & understanding not previously seen.

So to me that is God's Coming Spiritual Revolution & the question for all of us & at this time especially East Africans is, can I receive it & believe that God has such a plan for those the world forsook?

What I know after 28 years is that I cannot convince anyone of what I See&Know but I have seen how the few in East Africa who have received the seed & turned to God for confirmation have received it.

For the 'seed' of EIDO that my sharing has planted in you can only germinate in the Glory of God as you Seek Him in regard to it & Holy Spirit revelation to your heart for our Father in Heaven is God of the Increase!

**"So then neither is he that planteth any thing. neither he that watereth; but God that giveth increase." 1 Corinthians 3:7
[To be continued]**

ISSUE 065: Draw Nigh Unto Me Part 63
Issued: 26th Jun 2018

Defaced - Week 55

God's Coming Spiritual Revolution - Part 2

After carrying the EIDO Vision virtually alone for the past 28 years, I am acutely aware of the fact that many readers will be having difficulty coming to terms with what I shared about the vision last week.

I believe that in the main this is because of our conditioned & conformed human way of looking first for a person's plan, goal, desired outcome or objective in what they put forth to us.

We do this to appease our understanding before allowing the giving of our full, partial or conditional acceptance.

For are not our thoughts, when a complete stranger invades "our space", immediately turned to discover as quickly as possible what his plan is, what his purpose is, what his intent is.

What's his objective & does it fit into or resemble any of mine?

Then we ponder on whether any perceived consequences might befall us before granting full acceptance to him or what he promotes to us.

If we cannot appease these elements within ourselves at all levels, then we restrain ourselves in our approach until all are to our satisfaction.

Such perception, I believe, is why so many Christians who are lacking conscious awareness of Truth allow themselves to unwittingly perceive Church as a 'safe zone' giving their full acceptance to it but not necessarily to God in Truth.

They receive the 'god' that fits into their acceptance pattern, but not the God of Truth.

Church then becomes a haven of rest from the constant need to exercise some form of vigilance & discernment in life.

They find a place of rest & a yoke that helps carry their 'load' but is it the Yoke of Jesus?

All they want underneath it all is to relieve the pressures of life & hope for a better lot in life & convince themselves that is the Truth of the Gospel for them & never seem to find its Call to His Destiny.

It also leaves them prone only to accept & receive what is 'filtered' to them from their perceived safe zone being their Church or Denomination or even the wider "sanitised & proven" belief system to which they are attached.

For others, it would be entirely out of their 'box' although some might see something of God in it but be personally unable to grasp anything from it only because it does not fit anywhere into the template they use.

For some few, without knowing how, will find it has taken seed in them & as it causes them to Seek the Face of God acceptance grows for He is God of the increase.

Talk of having received a Vision from God usually provokes all sorts of reactions, mainly due to such seemingly grandiose ideas promoting thoughts that the visionary is a romantic with an overblown imagination.

Let me share with you that EIDO's outworking in me & my family's life over the past 28 years has been so very, very far from any romantic idealism.

If within the acceptance of the vision our future revealed itself, I am sure none of us would have been willing to subscribe to it.

For a Call of God brings with it a Divine compelling to submissive obedience & imparts the Divine Peace & Grace required to stand in it unrelenting, knowing that God's Word never returns void.

All Glory To God for that!

When Holy Spirit breaks the old & remoulds our lives & way of thinking we discover that we do not need to work at obeying for His Presence in us has DEFACED our disobedience with the Obedience of Jesus Christ making all things possible in Him.

We need to let go & Let God!

Therefore, in whatever situation or circumstance that befall us in our personal lives or even within our Calling, we learn through the Obedience of Jesus to therein be content & Trust in the Lord Always.

So from what I previously shared last week, I was to fly out to Uganda on 25th September 1990 on the first of six journeys ending in, what has to date become, our seemingly permanent return to Australia since October 2000.

Regardless of my present situation & circumstance, I know that if He requires me to return under His Divine Purpose He will open the door again & no man will shut it.

When we returned in 2000, we once again left EIDO International in the hands of the seven young indigenous Ugandans who had been upholding EIDO in Uganda since 1994.

Ever since receiving the EIDO Vision & Call I had struggled to explain what the EIDO Vision is in a pure form.

My life now dedicated to & living within EIDO, consistently being filled with pieces of a vast puzzle, some formed into a general picture & yet multiple other aspects only partially built in my heart.

And an endless number of pieces yet to be seen by me.

Then on 6th November 2006 Holy Spirit spoke to my second son while in prayer giving him a concise statement of what EIDO is.

At that time EIDO International had just been officially registered as a Foreign NGO in both Uganda & also Burundi, in the latter case by a miracle of God.

When on a 40-day prayer vigil on a mountaintop in Kenya a Burundian Pastor who was unknown to us, was to be given the word EIDO by God.

Not knowing English at all he had no idea of what it meant & all his questions directed to God went utterly unanswered.

At the same time, our then Director of EIDO East Africa, a Ugandan, felt God tell him to go to Burundi now, a nation he had never entered & told him nothing of why nor what he was to do there.

On reaching Kigali Rwanda, he went for coffee & sat with a man to ask if he knew anything about Bujumbura & what is available there regarding accommodation & possible cost.

The man said he met a Burundian man at Bible College in Kenya where he still was but arranged for this other man's family to receive him in Bujumbura which they did.

From there Holy Spirit laid on his heart the need to find this man in Kenya which eventually he did & was surprised to find that he knew the word EIDO & was then able to answer his questions.

So in the midst of all these events happening after more than a decade of nothing you might imagine the heightened spirit with which our son was moving with God at the time of receiving this message for me:

"The reason you struggle to explain to people the EIDO vision is because it is neither a Ministry or Organisation.

**It's a Spiritual Movement, a Spirit that God is moving throughout His Church worldwide,
a Reckoning,
a Preparing,
a Call to Arms
& the Final Assault.**

The EIDO Ministry fits into one of those 'Ministries' that God will use and has established for this, but the Vision goes beyond a ministry.

After all, EIDO is 'To See & To Know' or to have

understanding God

It is the opening of the eyes of The Church to the Kingdom & the Call God has placed on His children to usher in the day of His Return."

God had birthed EIDO in the Mid North Area of South Australia 28 years ago & we were not to discover until January 1993 that in January 1990 He seeded it into the seven young men, mentioned above, in a small village in Eastern Uganda.

Today in Australia it remains officially registered under the South Australian Incorporations Act as EIDO International Incorporated & known as the EIDO International Fellowship Of Unity.

The Management Committee consists of just three, myself, my wife & one sister who has stood with us for 22 years now & our children being adherents.

There is no active support from any quarter at all within Australia & in fact there never has been.

Since I obeyed God's Call to go to Uganda in 1990 EIDO has had a continual small presence in East Africa, being first established in Uganda & eventually spreading to Kenya, Burundi, Tanzania & Rwanda.

Through seemingly endless personal communications, & the Ministering of those who received the Call to their hearts in East Africa, it has in some way touched an unknown number that now at the very least have heard of the name EIDO.

How many EIDO seeds are lying dormant in hearts for now, only God can See&Know.

The former EIDO Regional Director for East Africa who took it to Kenya, Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda & many areas of Uganda estimated that it touched tens of thousands.

Today in East Africa it remains with a Pastor I have personally known since 1990 as the second Regional Director of EIDO East Africa & officially represented in every nation except Kenya.

Anything remaining there today only exists because of the Lord.

For we started with nothing & now have less than nothing in support, finances or materials after many years of walking in faith by us here & those standing with us in East Africa.

I speak this only to show that something of EIDO, a mere speck of what it is Destined to be, has physically remained alive in East Africa for 28 years.

Despite it having come through numerous situations & several transitions that would typically be devastatingly fatal ordeals.

Those involved still believe that what has & is made manifest, is in Truth nothing but the small visible tip of a gigantic spiritual iceberg.

I could go on forever about the myriad of obstacles both large & small that have fallen across its path so many times along the journey.

However, this is neither the time nor the place for that.

EIDO, being a Spiritual Movement, cannot be measured by any conventional means we would typically or individually employ when desiring to assess a Christian Ministry or Organisation.

For until each step attains to physical manifestation & outworking it lives only in the hearts of those who receive the Call to it.

For they will now uphold it in their hearts & surrender to the EIDO Anointing as ones, who can now See&Know.

"If the axe is dull, And one does not sharpen the edge, Then he must use more strength. But wisdom brings success."
Ecclesiastes 10:10

True Visionary Leadership Flows From God

"True Visionary leadership flows from God, so it is important to stress that vision is not a plan!

Vision is not a goal!

Vision is not a desired outcome or objective.

**Instead, vision is God's perspective given to humanity,
God gives the prophet a vision, and we respond.**

In a Christian context, a visionary leader is not someone who comes up with great or grand ideas.

A Christian visionary is someone who sees visions from God.

He or she sees the vision, writes it down, and lives it out!

**"Where there is no prophetic vision the people cast off restraint, but blessed is he who keeps the law." Proverbs 29:18
ESV**

Many Christians have used this verse to justify the writing of vision statements and church objectives.

Vision statements and objectives might be a good thing, but this verse is not talking about such things.

The proverb reveals the straightforward reality that we are to live by God's revelation, God's Word, God's Will, and God's Law.

When people live without the Word of God, they begin to live outside of God's ordained boundaries.

Instead of living within the limits of God's parenting, visionless people perish.

They then resort to the pursuing of their own words, rules, laws, and regulations. "

**Paraphrased excerpt from Doug Bursch's
'True Visionary Leadership Flows from God'
A Biblical Perspective of Visionary Leadership
<https://www.fairlyspiritual.org/2012/03/14/a-biblical-perspective-of-visionary-leadership/>**

**ISSUE 066: Draw Nigh Unto Me Part 64
Issued: 4th July 2018**

Defaced - Week 56

God's Coming Spiritual Revolution - Part 3

Within the last three to four week period, I have received an enormous influx of friend requests on my Facebook Account causing my total friends list to increase by one thousand to date.

Every day more requests were coming, my phone was pinging relentlessly throughout the day & night with messages that I would spend most of my spare time replying to as led.

Ironically the vast majority are East African & especially Ugandans & it intrigues me as to how they are so localised to the very area God had designated.

With my account set to public, I wonder why not from all over the world?

I try to personally interact with all who make contact which has resulted in many questions about me & what exactly my ministry is.

A common question is 'are you a Pastor?'

After all these years this sudden ongoing interest has found me somewhat unprepared in just how to give an easily understandable explanation in such a somewhat casual circumstance.

I sometimes think how much simpler it would have been if I were to be a Pastor, an Evangelist, a Missionary or standing in any other recognised role within Christendom.

My position could have then been easily perceived as 'fitting' & therefore acceptable in general with a real possibility of opening an opportunity for mutual sharing of plans, purposes, personal ideas or hopes.

Such a moment can open people up, leading to a desire to gain a more profound view of one's perspective & practical outworking of the broader aspects of a recognised role.

For don't we forever look to make a comparison of one another's 'ways of doing' to justify or even improve 'our way of doing it' in all aspects of our lives.

If or when desirous acknowledgement couples itself within agreement an opportunity for true support is given the ability to manifest out of one or more of the spiritual, physical, material or financial realms.

For are those four realms not the common areas of need for all mankind & any lack of one or more is what can or does retard our advancement in so many areas of life?

The greater the lack, the more we are made to feel that our 'wings are clipped' in life.

For twenty-eight years now I have dealt, in one way or another, with East Africans on an almost daily basis.

Compared to us they are living in undeveloped nations where they all endure a daily lack of support in all the areas mentioned above.

Despite this, for nearly three decades now, EIDO has found little or no support in the physical, material or financial areas of its outworking there.

Having been Called by Faith, we have walked in faith, giving all we had until there was nothing more to offer, resulting in our physical absence for the past eighteen years after having had six visits in the previous ten.

And yet EIDO remains Spiritually Alive through a small physical presence within local Church Ministries or Ministers across the five nations of East Africa, only by the Grace of God,

EIDO to date remains mostly unseen in the physical, material or financial realms because primarily it is a Call & Vision from God, not easily recognised within any commonly identified form of Ministry.

*Vision is God's perspective given to humanity,
God gives the prophet a vision, and we are to respond.*

Is vision a command that we can respond to it with our tongue?

Is vision a law that we can respond to it with our obedience?

Is vision a need that we can respond to it through physical, material or financial support?

EIDO, in essence, is a Visionary Call & can only be responded to within faithful hearts that desire True Unity.

Hearts willing to be brought through its Anointing into Seeking Conscious Awareness of God, His Kingdom & True Unity.

True Unity is being in unity with God's Divine Purpose.

We are Christians which means Christ Follower & if we are to be True Christians, then we need to follow Christ in Truth.

At twelve years of age, Jesus declared something to his parents:

49 And He said to them, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" Luke 2:49 NKJV

He verified to his parents, some eighteen years before His Ministry was set to begin, his desire to be in True Unity with God's Divine Purpose.

He was speaking as the Son of Man, fully human, fully Spirit-filled.

Then at the end of his Ministry, there in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus, the man, stepped into the True Unity with God's Divine Purpose.

Luke 22:42 KJV

Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.

We cannot do it ourselves; we can only come into such a place through Jesus the One who is in True Unity with God's Divine Purpose.

When we first believed we were awoken to evidence of things not seen, the real existence of God through Grace by the faith given to us.

However, I believe, the remnant of our natural longing for physical, material or financial gain in life promotes a spiritual slumber within us that produces a sense of spiritual longing instead of Spiritual Desire.

This spiritual longing then consistently obscures the wisdom & revelation of the Fullness Of Truth by subtly clouding our perspective with anything from a mist to a full fog of 'righteous entitlement'.

Over the years in EIDO, I have come to believe that there is so much more wisdom & revelation to be revealed to us of The Truth, in these end days of The Church Age, that has previously been held clarity bound in Accordance with God's Divine Purpose.

This clouded perspective needs to be untied & set free from spiritual longing before we can come into Spiritual Desire to stand with Jesus in His True Unity with God's Purpose.

The time is coming for us to EIDO, for us to See&Know, to receive the fullness of Verse 17 finally:

Ephesians 1:15-23 KJV

15 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,

16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;

17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,

21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,

23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

So what is Spiritual longing?

As stated above the common areas of need in life are spiritual, physical, material & financial.

My secular dictionary describes longing as a strong persistent yearning or desire, especially one that cannot be fulfilled.

For Non-Christians, longing has always been embodied within personally gaining or increasing prosperity, especially in the non-spiritual realms for most people, the perceived lack of which is at the foundation of most of 'our problems' in life.

Therefore, to relieve the pain of our situations we long for an increase in the one or more of the spiritual [non-Christian], physical, material or financial realms.

For Christians, spiritual longing is embodied within any perception of having an assurance of blossoming prosperity that is more focused upon increase of the physical, material & financial realms of their individual and/or corporate body lives, rather than any true Spiritual Increase, which can only come from God.

With such being the 'longing' we tend to participate in, so freely at times, to falsely overlay our lives with a sense of hope for what in truth is more a self-desire, even within our walking & working within the Church.

In other words, we can tend to reinforce our lives with 'longings' of gaining things in & through Christ, that were never likely to happen or ever be possible for us before Christ.

Without exercising soberness in Christ a sense of 'entitlement' can quickly develop & warp our perspective.

Many of us can tend to transfer our unrequited secular longings into renewed hopeful spiritual longing, kept alive within the 'self' remaining in us.

Furthermore, when mutually practised within groups, many 'longings' can manifest through Christianised secular motivations & influences rather than pure faith & then we sanitise it by mutually giving glory to God for it.

I believe that spiritual longing has & is increasingly becoming the major problem in the outworking of Churches worldwide, more especially since the beginning of this postmodern period having originated in the early to mid-nineties.

Correspondingly, a spirit of selfishness has become rife throughout the world which I believe is affecting Christians as we live amongst it, and has quickly changed the paradigm of the Church worldwide.

So many Christian perspectives now widely accepted & practised are something the Church, even thirty to forty years ago, would never have received.

If we do not hold onto & seek more Biblical Truth within the Spiritual Desire God has for us, then we will continue to be led more by having faith in faith, rather than True Unity with God's Divine Purpose through Faith in Christ Jesus.

Spiritual longing puts us in the image of Jesus, Spiritual Desire will put Jesus in the image of us.

John the Baptist put it this way:

30 He must increase, but I must decrease.

31 He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all.

32 And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony.

33 He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.

34 For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.

35 The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.

John 3:30-35 KJV

When God's Reckoning of the Church comes, I know which will stand & which will fall.

I hope that you & I are found holding together at that time within the Spiritual Desire that revealed the True Unity to us.

To be continued.

[ISSUE 067: Draw Nigh Unto Me Part 65](#)

[Issued: 10th July 2018](#)

Defaced - Week 57

God's Coming Spiritual Revolution - Part 4

So how do spiritual longings retard the growth of Spiritual Desire?

As humans, we are naturally inquisitive beings wanting to know as much as we can about anything another person invades our world with, for in truth 'self' prevents any of us from possessing a total natural acceptance of each other.

In contrast, we are found to relentlessly hold onto our right to dictate where acceptance shall be granted & thereby, in reality, we are continually facilitating the basic concept of 'self.'

Some eight or so years ago the Holy Spirit laid on my heart that we just do not realise "the full insidiousness of self".

Definition of Insidious

adjective: insidious

proceeding in a gradual, subtle way, but with very harmful effects.

synonyms: stealthy, subtle, surreptitious, sneaking, cunning, crafty, Machiavellian, artful, guileful, sly, wily, tricky, slick, deceitful, deceptive, dishonest, underhand, backhanded, indirect; informal sneaky

"the insidious erosion of rights and liberties"

antonyms: straightforward

Origin mid 16th century: from Latin insidiosus 'cunning', from insidiae 'an ambush or trick', from insidere 'lie in wait for', from in- 'on' + sedere 'sit'.

However, 'self' is firmly founded within the deepest recesses of our soulish minds & while still in these bodies we can never be completely free of it.

For this reason, so many have grappled to find which category I fitted into their mindsets with Missionary the most common, for some Evangelist, for others a Preacher?

They would come near, touch but stand back because I could not help them to understand what I did not know myself, apart from the visions & strong leadings I had personally received.

My heart was sure it was God & miraculously I turned to find all my family with me, with God being the only explanation as I saw it.

I appreciated the adherents arrayed around me by God's Grace, but I fully understood their position & that we had to move in it alone, so to speak basically.

For twenty-eight years that has been no different here in Australia.

This innermost concept of self continuously dictates a need to ascertain to what degree we can allow this person, their motive or their idea to touch or affect our lives.

We quickly assess whether it might be either:

Harmful or safe?

Abhorrent or desirous?

Detrimental or beneficial?

Unworkable or practical?

Unprofitable or fruitful?

Etc. to us.

So we find ourselves prone to need to be informed of what is going on to our satisfaction so that we can either surmise, criticise, condone with or without any actioning, shelve it or even walk entirely away from it.

In fact, the more 'radical or revolutionary' it might seem in comparison to our set paradigms or perspectives, the more prone we are to move away from any ability for it to 'touch' us in some tangible way.

The most common responses I received for many years was "That's OK for you brother but" or "If you have the faith to believe go for it but"

Twenty-eight years of personal experiences walking in the EIDO Vision provoked in me an immediate confirmatory aligning with what I shared a couple of weeks back.

That is, a Visionary has no plan, purpose or ideas of his own to share only the insights He has received from God at any given time.

A further complication is that those insights received are continually increasing growing into a more comprehensive perspective of the Vision.

It is similar to putting together a jigsaw with thousands of pieces & no picture on the box to be guided by, just Holy Spirit Education, Motivation & Inspiration.

This lack of a precise clarity causes the reactions I have continually experienced for in having no plan, purpose or ideas to share immediately puts it into the radical or revolutionary area, where most will not venture easily.

In many ways, I can understand & sympathise with how others might feel & I know that only Holy Spirit revelation can set anything of it deeply into someone's spirit & soul.

I give All Glory to God for the few whom He has to date given such revelation, enabling them to stand with us & EIDO for decades now mainly in East Africa, regardless of our seemingly backward steps.

Also for the countless seeds ready for His germinating & sown across East Africa awaiting His Increase within His Perfect Timing.

Being human the feelings of nil or partial acceptance, of being gently put aside for years on end, of civilised Christian scorn received or even the numerous active & complete rejections take a real toll in the soul.

Regardless, in Spiritual terms, I have come to Believe that God inevitably turns every seeming backward step, in human terms, into another level of Descending into His Greatness.

In human terms, we must always ascend, but to take hold of God in Truth requires our rational thinking to descend into the immersion of True Wisdom & to the Ascension of His Greatness.

The greatest trial is the continual need to appease the soul that that which God so plainly Called you for is still moving forward.

For, in fact, everything seemingly testifies to your mind that it is stagnant or going backwards.

Even if three hundred pieces of a jigsaw linked into many recognisable sections across the board, but some nine thousand odd pieces remained mixed in the box, a broad question arises as to whether to continue.

You either buckle under the challenge & quit or move on by faith, in the case of a real jigsaw, by the confidence you have in yourself.

If its a Call you heard so clearly from God attached to a Vision you know He imparted, therein lies the substance of things hoped for.

Then even decades later & no matter your experiences there remains a sober compulsion to walk on in the faith He Gives for its enablement.

For within the experiences & the trials thereof, the evidence of things not seen is continuously being increased within the soul to become Living Faith.

We in our human nature hold tightly to our set paradigms or perspectives as we perceive them comfort to us, yet in fact, it only serves to give continued life to false securities.

For all these years I have never been asked very much at all about EIDO as I have seen it similar to when people casually meet in public & ask how are you or how is your family?

They want to know something, but if you give too much detail they suddenly remember they needed to be somewhere else or scrub it away with a Christianese cliché or platitude.

Once informed of any part of EIDO & alerted by curiosity or a spiritual prodding they want it explained in a nutshell, or they will soon be on their way.

When a true spiritual curiosity arises, I find most release it quickly if they cannot find a place for it within their well maintained & protected perspective.

For most, even should they perceive the spiritual origin, cannot deal with anything lacking a physical outworking or plan attached to it.

Imagine what everyone around Noah, apart from his family, was thinking of him until the rains came & did not stop.

Only those on the Ark were to survive which is a stark early reminder that sometimes we need to open ourselves to God & throw preconceived paradigms or perspectives out before its too late.

To be continued.

ISSUE 068: Draw Nigh Unto Me Part 66

Issued: 17th July 2018

Defaced - Week 58

God's Coming Spiritual Revolution - Part 5

So how do spiritual longings retard the growth of Spiritual Desire? (continued)

Following on from last week, I know that most Pastors & Leaders maybe saying 'but that's nothing new'.

They would, from personal experience, understand very well that in the main people don't want to know about the particular problems they as Ministers face daily.

Specifically about the challenges of the work which can be very thankless in many ways, as all True Ministry is.

To me the main difference I find is that should I be a Pastor for example, everybody would know in general terms about what my life's work is.

For no one needs to have explained to them what generically a Pastor is suppose to be or think to do.

Therefore the focus of any discussion would then revolve around how I am fulfilling my role, not the nature of my position.

An area of more in-depth discussion then can open up as to where the Ministry is currently at, its immediate needs, its hopes or indeed its Vision.

All of this being steps that can lead to providing avenues for the hearer to possibly stand as an adherent, support spiritually or financially, give materially or do supportive works for or even join the Ministry.

Being human, for most Christians any urge to serve can only turn into active support if they can gain a satisfying 'basic understanding' of what they may be led to support is doing or trying to achieve.

From there they look to be led Spiritually or Pastorally as to what traditional role they feel or are offered to perform as support.

Therefore, unless all shared goes unrequited, a supportive group builds to maintain the purpose of seeking growth in all areas of the life of a Church.

So what happens if God ignores our paradigms & none of these commonly accepted parameters or perspectives of who, what & when is being met.

I will allow you to find your answer to that by asking another question.

What caused God's Chosen People, the Jews, to fail to recognise who Jesus the Son of God was?

In my early days as a Christian, the Lord led me and/or my family with me to Uganda four times in as many years.

Our brethren sensed that God was doing something very different in their midst but could not find a place for it to fit comfortably into preconceived ideas or personal perspectives.

So faithfully they stood at arm's length withholding deep support until it might come to settle into a perspective they were comfortable with, which time was to prove, they never did.

Their collective thoughts of my role were most probably leant toward Missionary then Visionary in principle, but all failed them with the following events of 1994.

In February of that year we completely uprooted from Australia in answer to God's Call to virtually emigrate to Uganda with no plan to return & having all our future superannuation released to enable the building of a new home there.

This journey was to be my fourth & my family's second to Uganda, apart from our firstborn 15-year-old son who chose to forgo his second to pursue his desire of joining the Australian Air Force.

As our new home reached its second ceiling level the unthinkable happened, a situation I believe, certainly not one of God's Making but something He Allowed to happen for reasons known only to Him.

After only five months, the Pastor who welcomed me into his home in 1990 with our families genuinely becoming as one now 'chased us away'.

His ordering us to vacate his property & our new home still being built on it, now left us with nowhere to go with our three children, the youngest being our then eight-year-old daughter.

Note: Our Brother was to repent by mail some five years later & personally on reaccepting us back into his home & family at the very beginning of our very next trip to Uganda in 1999.

After leaving our Brother's home in July 1994 the Lord opened the way to continue by faith in Uganda & Permanent Visa's were being sought now by others recommendations to enable us to remain legally.

Two months later in the midst of this & a bout of severe malaria striking the whole family, God Called us home to be with our son.

The Lord laid on both our hearts that we needed to return as our son no longer had the security of knowing where we were & in whose hands we might be, or what we were now undergoing there.

It took a further two months to arrange the leaving of EIDO Uganda in the hands of the seven young men from Eastern Uganda the Lord had sent & revealed to us during our 1992 visit.

By faith, the required finances eventually came to hand & we returned to our son in Australia.

We were immediately to see the Truth of why the Lord laid in our hearts for us to return to him.

Our most significant trials were not faced in Uganda but on our return home, not regarding Ugandans but rather our own peers.

The very night before we arrived back the Leaders who had stood to support our son as Chairman of the EIDO Australia Ministry, took it upon themselves to convene a hurried meeting.

There they washed their hands of any involvement & stepped away from EIDO, cutting off any chance for us to officially defend ourselves to them.

Thereby preventing my family or me from ever being given a much-needed debriefing or any genuine opportunity to continue to establish EIDO's reputation amongst them, our peers.

Prejudged purely on the merits of the one letter from an unknown man with decades of Ministry experience who had previously stood in 'unity' with us, our family & Vision.

Being a Pastor, it only took one short communication to justify his action of 'chasing us away' which in turn brought forth a letter from my Pastor, well before I had arrived back home & without any real knowledge of what went on, apologising for my 'immature' actions in Uganda.

To such a level that they moved so quickly to cut themselves off without leaving any provision for the sharing of our view of events much less any opportunity of defending our actions.

My native peers had finally discovered a perspective or 'box' that would now fit my supposed actions in Uganda & remove the thorn from their side.

It now fell into the very one they feared the most & thereby validated their past reservedness of EIDO & thereby justifying their resistance to commit to any seen level of true acceptance.

To them, I now became the new, inexperienced, overzealous, self-absorbed dreamer who through displays of passion had drawn them reservedly by association into an International incident.

Our then Pastor quickly arranged for us to meet & explain ourselves to the 'The General' being the Founding Apostle of her affiliated denomination.

After an hour or so of discussion, he had no reservations about my actions under the circumstances we had found in Uganda.

His one comment was that a 'seared conscience' possibly contributed greatly to our once loving Brother's complete turnaround.

He further encouraged me to return home to Port Pirie & take up the helm of EIDO again.

After settling back home, it soon became apparent that any of the forms of supportiveness for EIDO previously given was now unspoken if not wholly absent.

Eventually, our Pastor shared with us her view that we were still loved & accepted personally but not EIDO, & my wife's reply was "EIDO is us."

It's always spiritually enriching in the Lord when visitors come with testimonies of God causing them to step out in faith to do things that to most of us are not personally comprehensible.

It's another thing altogether when it happens in our midst with people we know to be as ordinary & real as we are.

It can become a true paradoxical challenge to believe God is actually in the midst of something far outside the parameters of our well guarded personal perspective of what we think God would possibly do or allow.

For then we subconsciously are forced to provide an argument to satisfy our mind to ward off what our spirit's witness may be trying to show us.

For the witness of the Spirit that comes from without, witnesses to the Spirit within, for it is the self-same One Spirit of God.

Such a witness of the Spirit can cause us without conscious realisation to step back, or even back away entirely if we are not open to acceptance.

For it confronts our reasoning & thereby becomes a subconscious means of protecting our firmly established perspectives of our comfort.

The first thing to go is active support of any kind, done in the perceived hope that by deprivation of support you will somehow be forced back to conformity.

In the hope that learning maturity through obedience to the Church might bring you away from your 'failed dream' & join the Church in where it is heading.

We can love the Lord, sing His Praises, even give freely of what we have & yet deep within knowing the silent fear of what He might ask us to do or go through!

For those leaders nearest to us, their answer was to convince themselves that they could continue to receive us in love but not EIDO.

That, in Truth, is like telling your Truly Called Pastor that you will love him but not acknowledge the actual Calling of God upon his life.

Our brethren continued to love & honour us for who we were, however, EIDO was now neither sanctioned, promoted or openly spoken of by Leadership the Church.

Naturally because of this, all but a few have typically remained oblivious to its continued outworking for 18 years now.

Most likely convinced you gave it away just as they have seen so many Church programs do & due to the seeming 'non-conformity' one requires to hold on alone, you remain somewhat 'puzzling' to them.

God working in such ways can quickly become a silent thorn in the side of many Christians & Churches.

For the Truth is that over many Centuries the spirit of religiosity has systematically engaged in the sanitisation of the Radical Jesus who walked this earth.

"We were not called to be like our fellow Christians; we were called to be like Christ and let the mind which was in Him also be in us!" Ap Latino quote.

He is the Head & we the Body of Christ, but are we 'thinking' like Him?

To be continued.

ISSUE 069: Draw Nigh Unto Me Part 67

Issued: 24th July 2018

Defaced - Week 59

God's Coming Spiritual Revolution - Part 6

So how do spiritual longings retard the growth of Spiritual Desire? (continued)

In life, we live within the bounds of many various ethical standards which are merely sets of principles for right conduct in all the areas of life we would generally encounter.

The more these ethical systems are in place, the more we claim ourselves to be a civilised & refined people.

We have personal, familial, parental, social, educational, medical, lawful, political, religious & so many other major or minor ethical systems in place throughout society.

In their purest sense, they set the bounds or mark the perimeter of our communally acceptable 'playing fields of life'.

By either appearing to keep or to actually abide within those bounds, you are deemed to be an ethical person of principle & right conduct.

Furthermore, the more you appear centred within them, the more highly regarded as a desirous & acceptable person you become.

Go beyond them & you are labelled anywhere between unethical to outright rebellious & therefore engaged in conduct unworthy of general acceptance.

The very sin nature of man is disobedience.

Therefore we actually have two playing fields, each one being a shadow or opposing copy of the other.

One we unashamedly parade within, giving overt attention to it in the openness that its Light provides [Pride]

While the other we closet or hide in the Dark shadows of our lives, at times so profoundly that we subconsciously bury it there out of sight away from the conscious mind. [Guilt].

Pride brings with it:

***delight,
dignity,
ego,
happiness,
honour,
joy,
pleasure,
satisfaction,
self-confidence,
self-respect,
self-interest,
self-promotion,
face,
gratification,
pridefulness,
repletion,
self-love,
self-regard,
self-satisfaction,
self-sufficiency,
self-worth,
sufficiency.***

Guilt brings with it:

***depression,
gloom,
melancholy,
misery,
pain,
sadness,
trouble,
unhappiness,
woe,
disgrace,
humility,
modesty,
shyness,
timidity.***

As a further complication to our lives, we all somehow subconsciously regard the two areas as being complementary, interconnected & interdependent to each other.

All accommodated within the makeup of who 'WE ARE' in our own sight.

To be maintained under constraint, due to the comfort of familiarity, even though it simultaneously accounts for so much of our uneasiness & lack of inner peace.

Then through a lack of conscious awareness, we are convinced of our right to temporarily or permanently shift the boundaries to suit ourselves & what we want to do or achieve.

We thereby become the judge of our own actions resulting in the blurring of lines between personal private & public social behaviours.

So we all become like a four-faced Town Hall Clock showing four different times: which one is revealing or telling the truth of our innermost heart?

All of the above & more is what, I think, eastern mysticism or worldview would call yin & yang but the Bible refers to as the knowledge of good & evil.

[In Chinese philosophy, yin and yang describe how seemingly opposite or contrary forces may actually be complementary, interconnected, and interdependent in the natural world, and how they may give rise to each other as they interrelate to one another. Many tangible dualities are thought of as physical manifestations of the duality symbolised by yin and yang.]

The knowledge of good & evil was something we were never meant to have, the knowledge that brought sin into our lives & blinded us to the fact that it is all evil in the Sight of God.

A subtle system of deviousness cleverly designed to lead us into a subliminal involuntary self-restraining of the full potential God had Created in us.

The Conscious Awareness of God now nullified through subtle deceit resulting in a conscious awareness of self along with the lusts of the flesh to maintain it.

Being therefore restricted, cut short or reduced in our own minds, we are imprisoned within the limitations of our present set 'ethical playing fields'.

The pinnacles undergo continual shifting as man develops & improves upon his wisdom & knowledge in this world, but because of our imperfectness will always fall so very far short.

So therefore while we tie ourselves up dealing with our 'toing & froing' we fail to see that the targets we are supposedly trying to achieve are false.

For within whatever particular 'ethical playing field' we are participating in at any given time our goal is limited to reaching the very centre of it.

A murky centrepiece seemingly set by men & one that the closer you get to it the further away you find yourself.

For in the very act of reaching for it, you are being set up to subliminally reveal the other side of yourself to your inner self, which then adds to your hidden guilt designed to restrain & cause subconscious agitation.

However, self-delusion can cause us to believe that in other's eyes the reaching of it would bring an 'epiphany' to our lives, being a revelatory manifestation of our own sense of 'divine' being.

If pride be the vehicle to our self-destruction, then self is the fuel that motivates it.

I believe within this End of the Church Age Season we need to become more attuned to what the Spirit of God is Saying to The Church.

For there are many things now rife in the Church worldwide manifesting out of the 'yin & yang' of the world still within us.

And further disguised by the rampant spirit of selfishness in this post-modern world that is making us more oblivious than ever in so many ways.

Oblivious, as I have only just discovered, is a word one meaning of which is to lack conscious awareness.

Some years back in my walking in EIDO the Holy Spirit imparted to me the phrase of "EIDO Seeking Conscious Awareness of God, His Kingdom & its True Unity".

I believe we need to be seekers of such a conscious awareness, especially in these days for He is Calling for us to Draw Nigh Unto Me.

It's a personal Call to every one of us in this season.

It is not miracles or signs & wonders we need for even sorcery & witchcraft can bring those for beware the wolf that comes in sheep's clothing.

Today, more than ever, so many are having their faith tested sorely or even worn down under the weight of the lack of their & the Churches lack of awareness of the prevailing season.

I believe that this situation is mainly due to our inbuilt preponderancy, meaning the superiority in weight, force, importance, or influence, of religious ethics rather than being Holy Spirit led.

Our 'ethics' instead of drawing us nigh to Him in such a time have actually brought us to a place today where we are finding ourselves challenged deeply if not divided on issues such as same-sex marriage.

Convincing ourselves that 'our loving relevance' is more important than standing firm on The Word.

So what is waiting for us around the corner?

Already thinking Christians are finding themselves continually more confused about the massive changes taking place in the Churches.

Watching them become places of entertaining hospitality more focused on gaining or maintaining quantity rather than quality.

Convincing ourselves that it is Christ leading us to be relevant to the quickening shifts in this post-modern world.

Not realising the draw the world still has upon hearts not yet fully resolved in truthfully being in this world but no longer of it.

Matthew 24:23-24 KJV

23 Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.

24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

That is why the Bible continually speaks of denying self, for only in such self-denial can we ever hope to find levels within The Truth.

For the spirit of religiosity over many centuries has established religious ethics that keep men 'imprisoned' in the ways of ethical thinking as described earlier.

If there was no God, ethics are indeed a system to provide & define boundaries within which men can establish a somewhat viable & visibly ordered way of communal life.

However, in reality, it is a system based on self-preservation & self-interest, having been founded upon devious knowledge delivered through subtlety.

Further, the endless fine 'niceties of thought are continually misguiding us' & serve to blind us to the subtle distinction between Righteousness & good, unrighteousness & evil.

This leaves us somewhat oblivious or blind, deaf, inattentive, unconcerned, unfamiliar or uninformed about the Knowledge of The Truth.

If we are to be genuinely desirous to partake of The Truth, then we need to seek with our hearts to be attentive, aware, concerned, conscious, mindful, sensitive & understanding.

Truth set us free from the fullness of the lie, but the Bible says its the knowledge of The Truth that will set us free & free indeed!

John 8:32

“And ye shall KNOW THE TRUTH, and THE TRUTH shall make you free.”

King James Version (KJV)

[emphasis added]

To be continued.

**Love,
Mwesigwa**

[Defaced - Week 60 follows next week]

ISSUE 070: Draw Nigh Unto Me Part 68

Issued: 31st July 2018

Defaced - Week 60

God's Coming Spiritual Revolution - Part 7

So how do spiritual longings retard the growth of Spiritual Desire? (continued)

So is there a difference between receiving truth & knowing The Truth?

Once dead in sin God Called us by name & quickened us together with Christ so that by Grace we were saved, our names now written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

We did not choose Christ; He chose us.

John 15:16 KJV

16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

We were now awakened to the true existence of God & given a new life to lead, now founded upon Christ in the hope of our salvation.

In fact, this was the first conscious essence of Truth of God's Existence given to our heart & mind since we left our Mother's womb.

**Hence why, when we had such an experience, we remember so well the newness of life that so totally overwhelmed us in:
love inexplicable,
joy unspeakable,
peace unflappable,
patience unblemished,
gentleness unassuming,
goodness immeasurable,
faith invincible,
humbleness incorruptible
self-restraint unconquerable.**

To be our initial spiritual sighting of the True Character of God unveiled to us in Christ Jesus.

To capture us in First Love by the rendering of His Character on our heart in the most precise form to be seen by any of us this side of Eternity.

Ephesians Chapter 2:1-7

1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

5 *Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)*
 6 *And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:*
 7 *That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.*

As the Fire of First Love subsides, we then find ourselves forging ahead into a New Life of faith still lived in this world but hopefully no longer of it.

Hebrews 11:1 KJV

1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

When Born Again we are rebirthed into New Life founded upon Jesus Christ to give rise to the substance for the things of God for which we now hope.

While the internalised Christ through the Power of Holy Spirit bears Witness to the evidence of things not seen.

All available to us through the small seed of Faith God gave us by Grace, so we might first believe Jesus is the Son of the Living God.

Also bearing Witness to an often overlooked fact that we were made captive to Christ Jesus, that brought & holds a Divine Compelling to our heart if we are open to it.

Not in chains, but instead by being Knitted Together In Love to the very fabric of God's Kingdom in Christ Jesus.

A captivity now leading us to walk in His Light, to gain wisdom & revelation of The Truth through increasing knowledge of Who God Is.

Therefore, let us not in any way boast of works lest we stifle the fullness of God's intended Divine Purpose of our receiving His Grace Through Faith.

Ephesians 2:8-10 KJV

8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them

May we Seek to Know that God's Divine Purpose was founded on the fact that Jesus came to irrefutably reveal Our Father & His Kingdom in Heaven to the world.

The Divine Purpose is to bring this world as it is to its end being the Cause, the Saving of souls is the Effect, never vice versa for without a cause there can be no proper effect.

God's Kingdom does not need souls to make His Kingdom exist; He requires His Children home to fulfil its Divine Purpose through Christ.

Man was cast out from God's Presence through the defacing of the Obedience of Christ constituted within the Image of God in which He created them.

Our Father has now, in this Church Age, sent His Love in the form of Emmanuel in the hope of bringing us home again.

Just as similarly related in more human terms in the parable of the Prodigal Son for his father's love went with him & remained throughout his rebelliousness.

The revelation of which at his pig's trough finally drew him back to find full forgiveness & acceptance again, regardless of what he got up to throughout his period of disobedience.

May God Awaken us to the fact that there is a fragile barrier between slumber & conscious awareness, but one we can only traverse by the Father of Glory giving us gain through the spirit of wisdom & revelation in the knowledge of him.

Ephesians 1:17-23 KJV

17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

That our mind, will & emotion, being our soul, might now be Spiritually led toward a righteous manner of prayer based upon thought, intent & motive Jesus Himself revealed.

To teach the manner of intent we should approach prayer with, Jesus succinctly yet powerfully encapsulated all in the words of the Lord's Prayer.

Matthew 6:9-13 KJV

9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

In a prayer after this manner, we spiritually declare & establish our thoughts, intent & motives in affirmation [to uphold the Truth of] from our spirit to reaffirm [to affirm or assert again] to our soul the following:

Our Father

- we affirm God's Fatherhood to reaffirm Sonship in Christ Jesus

which art in heaven

- we affirm God's Heavenly Abode to reaffirm His Presence with us

Hallowed be thy name

- we affirm God's Holiness to reaffirm sanctification in Christ Jesus

Thy kingdom come.

- we affirm God's Kingdom to reaffirm all that's right & true, good & kind

Thy will be done

- we affirm God's Omniscience to reaffirm obeying Our Holy Father

in earth,

- we affirm God's forming man of the dust to reaffirm His Will be done in us

as it is in heaven.

- we affirm God's Sovereignty to reaffirm the need for obedient servitude

Give us this day

- we affirm God's Our Provider to reaffirm total dependency for all things

our daily bread

- we affirm God's Infallible Word for daily spiritual guidance & leading

And forgive us our debts,

- we declare God's Graciousness to reaffirm His sparing our guilt

as we forgive our debtors.

- we declare God's Mercy to reaffirm our need to in turn be merciful

And lead us not into temptation,

- we declare God's Righteous Way to reaffirm a need to follow after it

but deliver us from evil:

- we declare God's Mercifulness to reaffirm our consciousness of evil

For thine is the kingdom,

- we declare God's Authority to reaffirm His Deity & Sovereignty in us

and the power,

- we declare God's Might to reaffirm His Loving Authority in us

and the glory,

- we affirm God's Gloriousness to reaffirm His Infinite Beauty & Greatness

for ever.

- we affirm God's Immutability to reaffirm He will never change

Amen.

- to reaffirm so be it

For hearts that lean in such manner of thought, intent & motive lead to a Living Faith focused upon ever-increasing evidence of things unseen to the natural eye.

John 20:29 KJV

29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

For blessed is he who believes but does not see.

To be continued.

Love,
Mwesigwa

[Defaced - Week 61 follows next week]

ISSUE 071: Draw Nigh Unto Me Part 69

Issued: 7th August 2018

Defaced - Week 61

God's Coming Spiritual Revolution - Part 8

So how do spiritual longings retard the growth of Spiritual Desire? (continued)

Last week we saw how our most powerful sight of God's Divine Character spiritually revealed itself in the first love generated when Jesus Came Alive to our once dead spirit man.

A love for Jesus that brought alive in us a subliminal spiritual revelation of the son of man's instinctive understanding in what manner our supplications to God might now be brought, as given in the Lord's Prayer.

Therefore, from a spiritual awareness that began in the Holy Spirit fire of our first love, resulting from acceptance of Divine Revelation of the Son of God, we are now called to run a race to the end.

To run with a hunger for an ever-deepening awakening to The Truth of Jesus Christ, being the spirit of wisdom, while thirsting for an ever growing fullness of revelation of what is contained within the knowledge of him.

Thanksgiving and Prayer

Ephesians 1:17-23 KJV

17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, 21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this

and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, world, but also in that which is to come:

22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,

23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

For in being born again we were mercifully taken from a life totally incapable of spiritual fulfilment in God, to being given by Grace a chance to live life in hope of salvation delivering us into an eternal existence with God.

1 Thessalonians 5:8 KJV

8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

I believe we all know the Spiritual Truths & practical advice for right living that Apostle Paul concisely packed into his Letter to the Church of Ephesus known as the Book of Ephesians.

Especially in the instructing of how to equip ourselves for our daily walk in Christ.

The Whole Armour of God

Ephesians 6:10 -17

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all, to stand.

14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

In truth the New Testament reveals more about the history of the Church of Ephesus than any other.

It was also to become the first church Jesus spoke of in the Apocalypse.

In Revelation 2 He first spoke in Verse 4 of something He had against them:

Revelation 2:4 KJV

4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

And then in Verse 6 He spoke of what He hated, they also hated:

Revelation 2:6 NKJV

6 But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

Question:

"Who are the Nicolaitans mentioned in Revelation 2:6, 14-15?"

Ref: <https://www.gotquestions.org/Nicolaitans.html>

Revelation 2:6 KJV

6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

Revelation 2:14-15 KJV

14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. 15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

Answer: The exact origin of the Nicolaitans is unclear.

Some Bible commentators believe they were a heretical sect who followed the teachings of Nicolas—whose name means “one who conquers the people”—who was possibly one of the deacons of the early church mentioned in.

Acts 6:5 KJV

5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch:

It is possible that Nicolas became an apostate, denying the true faith and became part of a group holding "the doctrine of Balaam," who taught Israel "to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality."

Clement of Alexandria says, “They abandoned themselves to pleasure like goats, leading a life of self-indulgence.”

Their teaching perverted grace and replaced liberty with licence.

Other commentators believe that these Nicolaitans were not so called from any man, but from the Greek word Nicolah, meaning "let us eat," as they often encouraged each other to eat things offered to idols.

Whichever theory is true, it is certain that the deeds of the Nicolaitans were an abomination to Christ.

They, like the Gnostics and other false teachers, abused the doctrine of grace and tried to introduce licentiousness in its place.

2 Peter 1:15 KJV

15 Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;

2 Peter 2:19 KJV

19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

Jude 1:4 KJV

4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus commends the church of Ephesus for hating the deeds of the Nicolaitans as He does:

Revelation 2:6 KJV

6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

No doubt the leaders of the Ephesian church protected their flock from these destructive heresies and kept their people from committing the same evil deeds.

All sin is hateful to Christ, as it should be to His followers, as we hate men's evil deeds, not the men themselves.

For the church at Pergamos, Jesus had not commendation, but censure.

Unlike the Ephesians, they actually embraced the teachings of the Nicolaitans:

Revelation 2:15 KJV

15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

Jesus warns them that unless they repent, they are in danger of the judgment that is sure to fall on those who teach false doctrine, attack His church, and destroy His people.

The sword of judgment is poised over their heads, and His patience is not limitless :

Revelation 2:16 KJV

16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

Revelation 19:15 KJV

15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

The lesson for us is that the church of the Lord Jesus throughout the ages has been plagued by those of the Nicolaitan spirit.

The only way to recognise false teaching is to be intimately familiar with truth through the diligent study of the Word of God. End of Article

To be continued.

ISSUE 072: [Draw Nigh Unto Me Part 70](#)

Issued: 15th August 2018

Defaced - Week 62

God's Coming Spiritual Revolution - Part 9

So how do spiritual longings retard the growth of Spiritual Desire? (continued)

Following on from what we have been touching upon lately, I am now feeling led to share Matthew Henry's Commentary on Christ's Letter to the Church of Ephesus in Revelation Chapter 2.

Revelation 2:1-7

To the Church in Ephesus

*We have here,
I. The inscription, where observe,*

*1. To whom the first of these epistles is directed:
To the church of Ephesus, a famous church planted by the apostle Paul (Acts 19),
and afterwards watered and governed by John,
who had his residence very much there.*

*We can hardly think that Timothy was the angel, or sole pastor and bishop, of this church at this time,
- that he who was of a very excellent spirit, and naturally cared for the good state of the souls of the people,
should become so remiss as to deserve the rebukes given to the ministry of this church.*

*Observe,
2. From whom this epistle to Ephesus was sent;
and here we have one of those titles that were given to Christ in his appearance to John in the chapter foregoing:
He that holds the seven stars in his right hand,
and walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks,
Rev 1:13, Rev 1:16.*

*This title consists of two parts: -
(1.) He that holds the stars in his right hand.
The ministers of Christ are under his special care and protection.*

*It is the honour of God that he knows the number of the stars,
calls them by their names,
binds the sweet influences of Pleiades and looses the bands of Orion;
and it is the honour of the Lord Jesus Christ that the ministers of the gospel,
who are greater blessings to the church than the stars are to the world,
are in his hand.*

*He directs all their motions;
he disposes of them into their several orbs;
he fills them with light and influence;
he supports them, or else they would soon be falling stars;
they are instruments in his hand, and all the good they do is done by his hand with them.*

*(2.) He walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks.
This intimates his relation to his churches, as the other his relation to his ministers.*

*Christ is in an intimate manner present and conversant with his churches;
he knows and observes their state;
he takes pleasure in them, as a man does to walk in his garden.*

Though Christ is in heaven, he walks in the midst of his churches on earth, observing what is amiss in them and what it is that they want.

*This is a great encouragement to those who have the care of the churches,
that the Lord Jesus has graven them upon the palms of his hands.*

*II. The commendation Christ gave this church,
ministers and members, which he always brings in by declaring that he knows their works,
and therefore both his commendation and reprehension are to be strictly regarded;
for he does not in either speak at a venture:
he knows what he says.*

*Now the church of Ephesus is commended,
(1.) For their diligence in duty:
I know thy works, and thy labour, Rev 2:2.*

This may more immediately relate to the ministry of this church, which had been laborious and diligent.

Dignity calls for duty.

Those that are stars in Christ's hand had need to be always in motion, dispensing light to all about them.

For my name's sake thou hast laboured, and hast not fainted, Rev 2:3.

Christ keeps an account of every day's work, and every hour's work, his servants do for him, and their labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.

***(2.) For their patience in suffering:
Thy labour and thy patience, Rev 2:2.***

It is not enough that we be diligent, but we must be patient, and endure hardness as good soldiers of Christ.

Ministers must have and exercise great patience, and no Christian can be without it.

***There must be bearing patience, to endure the injuries of men and the rebukes of Providence;
and there must be waiting patience, that, when they have done the will of God, they may receive the promise: Thou hast borne, and hast patience, Rev 2:3.***

We shall meet with such difficulties in our way and work as require patience to go on and finish well.

***(3.) For their zeal against what was evil:
Thou canst not bear those that are evil, Rev 2:2.***

***It consists very well with Christian patience not to dispense with sin, much less allow it;
though we must show all meekness to men, yet we must show a just zeal against their sins.***

***This their zeal was the more to be commended because it was according to knowledge, a discreet zeal upon a previous trial made of the pretences, practices, and tenets of evil men:
Thou hast tried those that say they are apostles and are not, and hast found them liars.***

***True zeal proceeds with discretion;
none should be cast off till they be tried.***

***Some had risen up in this church that pretended to be not ordinary ministers, but apostles;
and their pretensions had been examined but found to be vain and false.***

Those that impartially search after truth may come to the knowledge of it.

***2. The rebuke given to this church:
Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, Rev 2:4.***

Those that have much good in them may have something much amiss in them, and our Lord Jesus, as an impartial Master and Judge, takes notice of both;

though he first observes what is good, and is most ready to mention this, yet he also observes what is amiss, and will faithfully reprove them for it.

The sin that Christ charged this church with was their decay and declension in holy love and zeal:

***Thou hast left thy first love;
not left and forsaken the object of it, but lost the fervent degree of it that at first appeared.***

***Observe,
(1.) The first affections of men towards Christ, and holiness, and heaven, are usually lively and warm. God remembered the love of Israel's espousals, when she would follow him withersoever he went.***

(2.) These lively affections will abate and cool if great care be not taken, and diligence used, to preserve them in constant exercise.

(3.) Christ is grieved and displeased with his people when he sees them grow remiss and cold towards him, and he will one way or other make them sensible that he does not take it well from them.

***3. The advice and counsel given them from Christ:
Remember therefore whence thou hast fallen, and repent, etc.***

(1.) Those that have lost their first love must remember whence they have fallen; they must compare their present with their former state, and consider how much better it was with them then than now, how much peace, strength, purity, and pleasure they have lost, by leaving their first love,
- how much more comfortably they could lie down and sleep at night,
- how much more cheerfully they could awake in the morning,
- how much better they could bear afflictions,
and how much more becomingly they could enjoy the favours of Providence,
- how much easier the thoughts of death were to them,
and how much stronger their desires and hopes of heaven.

(2.) They must repent.
They must be inwardly grieved and ashamed for their sinful declension [decline]; they must blame themselves, and shame themselves, for it, and humbly confess it in the sight of God, and judge and condemn themselves for it.

(3.) They must return and do their first works.
They must as it were begin again, go back step by step, till they come to the place where they took the first false step; they must endeavour to revive and recover their first zeal, tenderness, and seriousness, and must pray as earnestly, and watch as diligently, as they did when they first set out in the ways of God.

4. This good advice is enforced and urged,

(1.) By a severe threatening, if it should be neglected:
I will come unto thee quickly, and remove thy candlestick out of its place.

If the presence of Christ's grace and Spirit be slighted, we may expect the presence of his displeasure.

He will come in a way of judgment, and that suddenly and surprisingly, upon impenitent churches and sinners; he will unchurch them, take away his gospel, his ministers, and his ordinances from them, and what will the churches or the angels of the churches do when the gospel is removed?

(2.) By an encouraging mention that is made of what was yet good among them:

This thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate, Rev 2:6

"Though thou hast declined in thy love to what is good, yet thou retainest thy hatred to what is evil, especially to what is grossly so."

The Nicolaitans were a loose sect who sheltered themselves under the name of Christianity.

They held hateful doctrines, and they were guilty of hateful deeds, hateful to Christ and to all true Christians; and it is mentioned to the praise of the church of Ephesus that they had a just zeal and abhorrence of those wicked doctrines and practices.

An indifference of spirit between truth and error, good and evil, may be called charity and meekness, but it is not pleasing to Christ.

Our Saviour subjoins this kind commendation to his severe threatening, to make the advice more effectual.

III. We have the conclusion of this epistle, in which, as in those that follow, we have,

1. A call to attention:

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Observe,

(1.) What is written in the scriptures is spoken by the Spirit of God.

(2.) What is said to one church concerns all the churches, in every place and age.

(3.) We can never employ our faculty of hearing better than in hearkening to the word of God: and we deserve to lose it if we do not employ it to this purpose.

Those who will not hear the call of God now will wish at length they had never had a capacity of hearing any thing at all.

2. A promise of great mercy to those who overcome.

The Christian life is a warfare against sin, Satan, the world, and the flesh.

It is not enough that we engage in this warfare, but we must pursue it to the end, we must never yield to our spiritual enemies, but fight the good fight, till we gain the victory, as all persevering Christians shall do; and the warfare and victory shall have a glorious triumph and reward.

That which is here promised to the victors is that they shall eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

They shall have that perfection of holiness, and that confirmation therein, which Adam would have had if he had gone well through the course of his trial:

he would then have eaten of the tree of life which was in the midst of paradise, and this would have been the sacrament of confirmation to him in his holy and happy state;

so all who persevere in their Christian trial and warfare shall derive from Christ, as the tree of life, perfection and confirmation in holiness and happiness in the paradise of God;

**not in the earthly paradise, but the heavenly,
Revelation 22:1-2 KJV**

1 And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

Reference: Matthew Henry Commentary on the Whole Bible [Complete]

To be continued.

**ISSUE 073: Draw Nigh Unto Me Part 71
Issued: 22nd August 2018**

**Defaced - Week 63
God's Coming Spiritual Revolution - Part 10**

So how do spiritual longings retard the growth of Spiritual Desire? (continued)

This week I wish to divert a little from the actual subject matter of the past few weeks to remind us all of the general topic of this series of articles.

I feel to now share the following article I had previously found of one man's perspective on the need for a Spiritual Revolution.

Below you will find out a little about the writer & in his article he says "I want to call for a Spiritual revolution in this nation."

As you will discover in the following short note about him that he Ministers to the Muslim world & nowhere does he name the nation, but I think we could reasonably assume it is a Muslim nation.

Or, of course, it could be his unknown to me home nation.

Whatever nation is irrespective to our line of thought here & so I felt to seed his thoughts on the subject along with a question for all of you?

Can you find any validity within you for the need of a worldwide Spiritual Revolution throughout the whole Body of Christ?

Ron or 30dp as he goes by on Twitter, knows a few things about change about creating a revolution. He definitely does his part everyday to create spiritual change or revolution. As he ministers and places his life in jeopardy daily while ministering to the Muslim world. Pray for Ron as he reaches and ministers to the Muslim World, and support him by following his blog.

Original article below can be found at:

<http://worldprayblog.org/do-we-need-change-or-a-spiritual-revolution/>

Note: Emphases added.

Do we need Change or a Spiritual Revolution?

We have heard a lot in the last while about “change”.

And why not, change is certainly needed all around us.

I also want to make a call for change but more than a simple call for change, I want to call for a Spiritual revolution in this nation.

Revival n.

- a time of awakening, a restoration to life
- stirs up what is old and stays for a season.

Revolution n.

- a radical and pervasive change in society and the social structure
- changes the way people think and act.

Christian means “little Christ”.

If people looked at you, your walk, your church, would they say you are a little Christ or perhaps a little like Christ?

We need to change our dynamic, our thinking; our lives.

Allow me to give you seven dynamics for revolution:

What are you expecting?

We must set our sights higher!

Ephesians 3:20-21 ASV

20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

1) Expect God to give you favour with leaders

We need to believe God for influence in this nation.

Proverbs 18:16 NAS

16 A man’s gift makes room for him, and brings him before great men.

I can give you endless examples of how ordinary men and women, believing God had met extraordinary leaders and helped them.

Perhaps you need to meet politicians, police, school directors or pastors.

Whatever, believe God to give you the favor.

2) Expect God to do great things through you.

Daniel 11:32 KJV

32 And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.

When was the last time you did a great exploit?

Expect them.

I travel the world and I have learned one thing, most people don't want to hear what I believe, but they are happy and expectant and ask me to pray for them.

Friends, exploits won't happen to you unless you expect God to use you.

3) Don't limit God to your circumstances

People do not determine God's will, things do not determine God's will, circumstances do not determine God's will.

His Spirit determines his will.

The world and the enemy will do whatever can be done to try to discourage you.

If we look at the circumstances surrounding our life through fleshly eyes, we can find every reason not to pray, not to believe, not to act.

Look to God, he will add HIS circumstances.

4) Don't be afraid to take risks

Faith is spelt R-I-S-K.

We need to once again place our lives in the hands of the Lord.

The only safe place in the world is in the perfect will of God.

I am not saying go out and be irresponsible and claim that it is God.

I am saying we need to find ourselves again in the place where His heartbeat is our heartbeat, we live listening to what he is saying and we do what He asks us to do.

We can't live by faith if we are not in the word and prayer because we have not learned to hear his voice.

5) Stop playing with sin

James 4:17 NAS

17 Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.

How many times I have been faithless when I should have had faith.

How many times I should have spoken and I didn't and the reverse.

How many times I should have been silent and I spoke.

How many times did I say, "oh, it's just a small thing ..."

6) We must love radically

They will know we are Christians by our demanding our rights ... or by our tearing down of people who are different from us ... or by our pointing out the sin in our brothers and sisters ... or by our love one for another.

That does mean standing against injustice, bringing correction to a brother or sister who are wrong but everything that we do must be motivated by love.

I believe my authority in Christ, my effectiveness as a man of God, my power as a Spirit-filled believer are directly related to my love.

7) We must be Christian

Our country is in trouble because Christians have stopped being Christian ... I am not sure what we have become but the Bible talks about the first Christians as those who would turn the world upside down.

Acts 17:6 KJV

6 And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also;

Are you tired of compromise and living under your potential?

If so, then please pray with me that the Lord will begin a personal spiritual revolution in us that we might really be Christians so true change can come.

God bless you to it.

To be continued.

ISSUE 074: Draw Nigh Unto Me Part 72

Issued: 4th September 2018

Defaced - Week 64

God's Coming Spiritual Revolution - Part 11

So how do spiritual longings retard the growth of Spiritual Desire? (continued)

The Sign of Jonah [Part 1 of 6]

By Doug Batchelor [Emphases added]

Ref: <https://www.amazingfacts.org/media-library/book/e/75/t/the-sign-of-jonah>

An Amazing Fact

It has been estimated that 10 billion birds engage in migratory flights every year. For example, one species of shrike wings its way 3,500 miles from Central Asia to the Equator of Africa. The longest recorded flight made by a homing pigeon took place in 1931, when the resolute bird flew from Arras, France, to its home in Saigon, Vietnam. When released, the pigeon flew straight as an arrow for 7,200 miles over unfamiliar territory to its home in only 24 days! But the Arctic tern has the longest migration of any animal: the tenacious tern wings from its nesting grounds in the Arctic North to the Antarctic and back: a roundtrip journey of nearly 25,000 miles!

Animal migration remains one of the great marvels, mysteries and miracles of God's creation.

Scientists are still mystified by how migrating animals know exactly where to go and when.

How do they unerringly find their way back to the same beach, stream, or feeding grounds that they haven't seen since birth?

Here are some more mind-blowing examples:

The Monarch butterfly is known for its extraordinarily long migrations.

During the summer months, Monarchs can be found fluttering from Canada and throughout the United States to their winter home in central Mexico— travelling in some cases more than 2,000 miles!

And the Chinook migrates farther than any other salmon, often travelling up to 2,000 miles inland to spawn in the exact freshwater streams and creeks as did their ancestors.

God's creatures have a wonderful, natural sense of bearing; however, humans, even many Christians, sometimes go the very opposite direction from where the Lord has directed them.

The Bible even teaches that in some respects, animals are often more in tune with the Lord than humans.

Job 12:7-9

7 But now ask the beasts, and they will teach you; And the birds of the air, and they will tell you;

8 Or speak to the earth, and it will teach you; And the fish of the sea will explain to you.

9 Who among all these does not know That the hand of the Lord has done this?

Scriptures provide a remarkable account of a reluctant prophet that went in the wrong direction until God arrested the wanderer's attention using His creatures and the elements.

Jesus later tells us that the story of that same wayward prophet serves as a beacon to help the lost find their way home to the Saviour.

Matthew 12:38-40

“Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying,

38 Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.

39 But He answered and said to them, ‘An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.

40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

I recommend that you take a few moments to read the book of Jonah to reacquaint yourself with the adventures of this amazing prophet.

(These four captivating chapters take only about 10 minutes to read, and it will greatly enhance your understanding and enjoyment of this fascinating study.)

Jonah: Fact, not Fable

An old woman rode home on a city bus quietly reading her Bible. An atheist sat next to her, cynically observing her devotions.

“Madam,” he finally interrupted,

“do you actually believe the Bible is true?”

Detecting the sarcasm in his voice, she simply said,

“Yes sir. Every word.”

He pressed his case.

“You mean you believe that God spoke the world into existence in six days?”

Without even glancing up, she replied,

“Absolutely!”

“And I suppose you believe that Noah survived a global flood, saving all the world’s creatures too?”

“Yes, I do!”

Growing exasperated, the man said,

“You probably even believe the story of Jonah?”

She nodded and continued reading.

“How could a man possibly survive in a fish for three days?”

“I’m not sure,” the old woman responded.

“I suppose when I get to heaven, I will have to ask him.”

Mockingly, the atheist asked,

“But what if he isn’t in heaven?”

For the first time, the Christian woman looked up at the irritating man and squarely met his gaze.

She answered,

“Then you will get to ask him!”

It’s a cute story—but let’s face it, few miracles of Scripture have been more doubted and maligned than the story of Jonah.

Sure, it seems too incredible to believe that someone could be swallowed whole by a large fish, much less survive for three days in its belly!

(The claims that a whale could not swallow a man whole is a myth! But it’s really not an issue either, because the word used in Jonah 1:17, like the one in Matthew 12:40, does not mean whale; instead, it means sea monster.)

I confess that early in my Christian experience, I wondered how the story of Jonah could be literally true.

But then I heard Dr. J. Vernon McGee, on his Through The Bible radio broadcast, cite three credible examples in modern times in which people were swallowed by some type of large fish—and then were later rescued alive!

One story dates back to the late 19th century.

The Star of the East, a whaling ship operating off the Falkland Islands in the South Atlantic, was in pursuit of a large whale.

Its harpoon boats were launched, and the whale was successfully speared.

However, in the violence that followed, one of the smaller boats capsized — throwing two crew members into the sea.

One of them was found drowned, but the other, James Bartley, disappeared without a trace.

The whale was eventually subdued, and its carcass hoisted onto the ship where the crew began carving it up for blubber.

After a couple of days, they worked down to the stomach, where they noticed something large moving around inside.

They cut the stomach open—and there lay James Bartley.

He was doubled up, unconscious, and even somewhat digested, but he was alive!

They doused him with seawater, put him in the captain's cabin to recover—and after a few weeks of bed-rest, he was back on the job.

Some accounts include a detailed description of what Bartley experienced and felt during his whale of a journey.

He said that he remembered flying through the air when the whale struck the boat with its tail.

Then suddenly, darkness surrounded him as he slipped along a smooth passage of some sort.

He then came into a larger area marked by a slimy substance that shrunk from his touch.

He soon realised that he was in the whale.

He could breathe, but it was also very hot!

He said that later he lost consciousness, and the next thing he remembered was the crew caring for him.

Other accounts say that Bartley's skin was permanently affected by the gastric juices in the whale, and that he had a bleached-white appearance for the remainder of his life.

Other versions describe his skin as having a bluish colour after his rescue.

Beyond this evidence, we should not forget that the Bible says:

Jonah 1:17

17 Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah.

This means that whatever modification this creature needed to accommodate Jonah's temporary residence, God prepared it.

Yet even more powerful than these arguments, it should be sufficient for every Christian that Jesus states Jonah's experience was a fact and not a fable.

Matthew 12:40

40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Continues Next Week

ISSUE 075: Draw Nigh Unto Me Part 73

Issued: 11th September 2018

Defaced - Week 65

God's Coming Spiritual Revolution - Part 12

So how do spiritual longings retard the growth of Spiritual Desire? (continued)

The Sign of Jonah - Part 2 of 6

By Doug Batchelor [Emphases added]

Reference: <https://www.amazingfacts.org/media-library/book/e/75/t/the-sign-of-jonah>

Three Days and Three Nights

Before addressing the meaning behind the “sign of Jonah,” I first want to explain the time interval of “three days and three nights.”

That is a frequently asked question in connection with this familiar text.

Because of a simple misunderstanding, this particular passage in Matthew has managed to cause confusion, frustration and even division among laypersons, clergy and scholars alike.

By first dealing with the popular “three days and nights” conundrum regarding the story of Jonah, we’ll be able to peacefully proceed through the rest of this wonderful study.

Jesus says that the Son of Man will “be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” —meaning in the tomb.

We’ll assume, as commonly believed, that Jesus died Friday and rose Sunday.

Noting this, no matter how you cut it, Jesus was not in the tomb for three nights—even though Scripture distinctly states “three nights.”

Many people I’ve met felt that the Bible just could not be trusted because of this supposed discrepancy.

And others attempt to accommodate the “three nights” verse by adopting the belief that Jesus died on Wednesday or Thursday—still others reason that Jesus did not really mean three literal nights.

Frankly, it’s very sad to see Christians expend so much energy struggling to explain something that the Bible clearly explains itself!

The problem is not in “the three days and three nights” at all.

The problem springs from our misunderstanding of the phrase “in the heart of the earth.”

I’ll first address this issue, and then explain what “heart of the earth” means.

Right Time, Wrong Place.

This “right time, wrong place” misinterpretation is strikingly similar to a tragic experience the Millerites experienced more than 150 years ago.

As the result of his diligent Bible studies, William Miller, a godly Baptist preacher, believed and taught that Jesus would return in 1844.

He based this on a verse in Daniel:

Daniel 8:14

14 And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.

William Miller then quickly located the starting point of this prophecy, which was 457 B.C. as predicted in Daniel:

Daniel 9:25

25 From the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem.

By adding 2,300 prophetic days—a day in prophecy equals a year according to Ezekiel 4:6—he calculated that Jesus would come in 1844.

Ezekiel 4:6

6 And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year.

They assumed that the sanctuary must be the earth, which is to be cleansed by fire.

Even though they had the right time—they had the wrong place and, in turn, the wrong event.

When the time came and went, and Jesus had not returned as thought, the devastated Millerites tried to find their error.

Many continued refiguring dates, even though the problem lay squarely on the place, not the time.

The Bible never calls the earth the sanctuary—therefore, the sanctuary in Daniel 8:14 does not mean the earth, which was the Millerites' blunder.

Indeed, Jesus was not coming to cleanse the earth with fire in 1844.

However, He did begin a special work as our High Priest to cleanse the sanctuary in heaven from the sins of His people:

Daniel 8:12-14 KJV

12 And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practised, and prospered.

13 Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?

14 And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.

Hebrews 8:1-6 KJV

1 Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such a high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens;

2 A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.

3 For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer.

4 For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law:

5 Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.

6 But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.

Leviticus 16:1-17 KJV

1 And the LORD spake unto Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered before the LORD, and died;

2 And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the vail before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat.

3 Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering.

4 He shall put on the holy linen coat, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a linen girdle, and with the linen mitre shall he be attired: these are holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and so put them on.

5 And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering.

6 And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house.

7 And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

8 And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for the scapegoat.

9 And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the LORD'S lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering.

10 But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness.

11 And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin offering which is for himself:

12 And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the LORD, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the vail:

13 And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not:

14 And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times.

15 Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the vail, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat:

16 And he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness.

17 And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel.

Christ also began to cleanse His sanctuary, or church, on earth from the false doctrines that had deeply taken root during the Dark Ages.

[Continues Next Week]

ISSUE 076: Draw Nigh Unto Me Part 74
Issued: 18th September 2018

Defaced - Week 66

God's Coming Spiritual Revolution - Part 13

So how do spiritual longings retard the growth of Spiritual Desire? (continued)

The Sign of Jonah - Part 3 of 6

By Doug Batchelor [Emphases added]

Ref: <https://www.amazingfacts.org/media-library/book/e/75/t/the-sign-of-jonah>

The Heart of the Earth

Whenever we attempt to gather the meaning of a passage in Scripture, we must compare it with other similar or related passages.

This allows the Bible—the inspired Word—to interpret itself.

Since the term “heart of the earth” is found only in Matthew 12, and nowhere else in Scripture, we need to find similar verses to reference.

Matthew 12:40

40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

The phrase “in the earth” appears 66 times in the King James Bible, but none of these refers to the grave.

For instance, in the Lord's Prayer we pray, “Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.”

Does this mean we're praying for God's will to be done in the tomb as it is in heaven?

No, of course not!

Rather, it means His will among the people of earth - the nations of the earth -as it is done among the angels in heaven.

In the second commandment, we read:

Exodus 20:4 KJV

4 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth

We easily recognise here that “in the earth beneath” does not mean in the grave, but rather in the world.

Jesus also says:

Matthew 5:5 KJV

5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Does that mean they will inherit the tomb?

I think you get my point.

In Matthew 12:40, the word “heart” comes from the Greek word kardia, which is where we get the word “cardiac.”

According to Strong's, kardia means the heart (i.e., thoughts or feelings [mind]); it also can mean the middle.

Additionally, the Greek word for “earth” is ge.

It literally means soil, a region, or the solid part or whole of the terrene globe (including the occupants in each application)—including country, ground, land, or world.

So the phrase “in the heart of the earth” can easily be translated as “in the midst of the world”—or in the grip of this lost planet—that Jesus came to save!

In other words, in Matthew 12:40, the Lord is telling His disciples that just as Jonah was in the belly of a great fish, so the Son of Man would be in the central clutches of the world.

The Hour of Truth

The life of Jesus is marked by several pivotal moments.

When He turned 12, He became aware of His life calling as the Lamb of God and His special relationship with the Father.

Then at His baptism, Jesus began His life of public ministry.

Mark 1:15 KJV

15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

But when exactly were the sins of the world placed upon the Lamb of God?

Was it when He died on the cross, or when they laid His body in the grave?

The answer is no.

These were part of paying the penalty for sin—having died on the cross and placed in the tomb, His suffering had ended.

Was it when they drove the nails into His hands?

That was certainly part of it, but the starting point was actually before the crucifixion.

According to Hebrew law, the sins of the people were placed upon the Passover lamb before it was slain.

During the Last Supper, with the bread and the wine, Jesus sealed His new covenant to be the Lamb who takes away the sins of the world.

Soon after the establishment of this new covenant at the Last Supper, Jesus began bearing our guilt, shame, and penalty.

It's worth mentioning that Jesus died during the Passover festival.

During that week, thousands of sheep were sacrificed in the Temple so that a virtual stream of blood was flowing from the Temple down to the Kidron brook and eventually flowing into the Dead Sea.

After the Last Supper, Jesus crossed the stream of blood on His way to Gethsemane.

“When Jesus had spoken these words, He went out with His disciples over the Brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered” (John 18:1).

Jesus went through the Jordan when He began his ministry, and He crossed the bloody Kidron when he began his sufferings.

Then in the Garden of Gethsemane, He prayed an intense prayer of surrender three times.

On that Thursday evening, Jesus prayed in agony, sweating drops of blood. He said, “Not my will, but thine, be done” (Luke 22:42-44).

From that moment on, Christ had sealed His surrender, fulfilling His destiny as the guilt-bearer for the fallen race.

The mob came and carried Him away.

Jesus was a captive of the devil.

For the first time in eternity, communion between the Father and the Son was interrupted.

The scissors of our sin cut the cord that had always linked Him to His Father.

He was in “the heart of the earth,” or more clearly: “the depths of the world.”

Just as with Jonah, there appeared to be a total and hopeless darkness that surrounded the world's redeemer.

There are five Bible verses in which Jesus refers to Thursday evening as “the hour,” meaning a pivotal transition time in His ministry:

“Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners” (Matthew 26:45).

“Then He came the third time and said to them, ‘Are you still sleeping and resting? It is enough! The hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners’” (Mark 14:41 NKJV).

“And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him” (Luke 22:14).

“Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone” (John 16:32).

“Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee” (John 17:1).

Hell’s Headquarters

A distinct change took place the hour Christ was betrayed into the “hands of sinners”—or we might better say “into the hands of the devil.”

Something different began to happen.

You see, before this point in Jesus’ ministry, every time a mob tried to capture or stone Him or hurl Him off a cliff, He passed unharmed.

He slipped right through their fingers.

This was because He was innocent before the Father, and therefore under divine angelic protection.

His hour had not yet come.

It was not yet His time to suffer for the sins of the world.

But after that hour—Thursday evening—when the past, present, and future sins of the world were placed upon the Lamb of God, then it was time.

Sometimes we forget that the penalty for sin is not just death; there is also punishment or suffering that is perfectly measured out according to our works (Luke 12:47; 2 Peter 2:9).

Jesus came to take our total penalty, the suffering, and the death (Romans 6:23).

When exactly did He begin to bear the sins of the world?

It was actually long before that.

It began Thursday evening in the Garden of Gethsemane.

From the moment He began bearing the penalty for our sins, Jesus was in the heart of the earth, or more accurately, the headquarters of hell.

Soldiers beat Him.

The crowds spat on Him.

He was dragged from one trial to another—from the high priest to Pilate, from Herod back to Pilate, and then finally to Golgotha.

He was in the clutches of this evil world, the clutches of the devil who is the prince of this world (John 16:11).

Also, remember that Jonah was not stationary while he was sequestered in the great fish, as with a dead person in a tomb.

Rather, he was like a living captive in a mobile submarine, to go wherever the fish took him.

When the fish went up, he went up; and when the fish went down, he went down.

In like manner, Jesus was a captive of the devil and his minions.

Satan was completely in the control of a demon-crazed mob that took Jesus from place to place, heaping abuse, insult, and physical punishment upon our Redeemer.

**When He suffered the punishment and penalty for our sins, He was “in the heart,” or in the midst, of this lost world.
[Continues Next Week]**

**ISSUE 077: Draw Nigh Unto Me Part 75
Issued: 25th September 2018**

Defaced - Week 67

God's Coming Spiritual Revolution - Part 14

So how do spiritual longings retard the growth of Spiritual Desire? (continued)

The Sign of Jonah - Part 4 of 6

By Doug Batchelor [Emphases added]

Ref: <https://www.amazingfacts.org/media-library/book/e/75/t/the-sign-of-jonah>

Imagine how Jonah must have suffered during his ordeal as a captive in the pitch-black belly of the great fish.

Three days in that slimy, stench-filled darkness must have seemed like an eternity.

(Have you ever considered that if Jonah could survive alive in that fish's digestive abyss, he may not have been the only creature still alive and squirming around in there?)

Yet the suffering of our Lord was infinitely greater than that of the famous wayward prophet.

How much Jesus must love us to willingly endure all that to spare us the miserable fate of the lost!

So as we look again at our Bible text, keep in mind that Jesus never said it would be three 24-hour segments, but rather, the suffering to end all suffering would occur over a period of three days and three nights.

Jesus was “in the heart of the earth,” or in the grip of the enemy, over a period of three days and three nights—Thursday night, Friday night, Saturday night.

He rose on Sunday morning.

Jewish Timing

Before leaving the timing issue, let's look at several passages in the Gospels where it plainly states Jesus would rise after 3 days—or the third day.

First, these verses are distinct and separate from the “three days and three nights” verse we've already considered.

In Mark 8:31, the Bible records, “And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.”

Then to add emphasis, “For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day” (Mark 9:31).

Some still try to use these texts to lengthen Jesus' time in the tomb.

They feel the story makes sense unless they calculate the time like a 72 hour phone call.

But look at it this way: When playing ping pong to determine who serves, you must volley the ball back and forth over the net at least three times before the rally counts.

It doesn't matter where the ball is on the table, as long as it goes over the net three times.

Likewise, if you rent a car for three days, some rental agencies charge for a car each day, not over a 24-hour period.

It doesn't matter how many hours you drive the car—if you have possession for any part of a day, you pay for the entire day.

So if you got a car at 6:00 p.m. on a Monday, kept it all day Tuesday, and returned at 5:15 p.m. on Wednesday, you're charged three full days even though you had the car for less than 48 hours!

In like manner, the Jews reckoned time in such a way that if an event touched on any part of three days, it was considered a three-day event—ending on the third day.

Jews also used sundials to keep time, and on cloudy days it was harder to measure exact time in hours and minutes.

If you lived in a big city, guards or watchmen would ring a bell or blow a horn to mark off the hours.

That's how the Bible writers could tell us what hour Jesus was crucified and later died (Mark 15:25; Mark 15:34).

Jonah Means Peace

There are many other ways in which Jonah is a type or sign of Christ.

Do you remember that just like Jesus, Jonah was asleep in a boat in the midst of a terrible storm?

When the captain found Jonah sleeping, he awoke the snoring passenger and said, "Arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not" (Jonah 1:6).

We can't miss the striking similarities in these words and the ones that the fearful disciples spoke to Jesus when they awoke Him!

The disciples awoke Jesus, as He slept in the stern on a pillow, and asked, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" (Mark 4:38, 39).

Jesus is not willing that any of us should perish, but we must call upon Him to awake and save us.

"Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord? arise, cast us not off for ever" (Psalm 44:23; 2 Peter 3:9; Romans 10:13).

It is also worthy of mention that both Jesus and Jonah were sleeping in the lowest part of their respective vessels (Jonah 1:5).

Jesus humbled Himself more than any other that He might exalt us.

In fact, the name Jonah means "dove," which is a symbol of peace.

Jesus is the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6).

When Jesus was sleeping in a boat during the storm, they woke Him up, and then He brought peace to their dilemma.

"And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm" (Mark 4:39).

Jonah the Sacrifice

Jonah instructed the sailors to throw him overboard if they wanted to survive and have peace.

I once wondered why Jonah didn't volunteer to jump overboard himself.

Yet had he done so, the sailors would not have had to take personal responsibility for him.

In the same way, we must accept responsibility for the death of God's son.

Like Jesus, Jonah too was a willing sacrifice.

The wrath of God was coming upon all those doomed sailors, and Jonah took the wrath by offering himself.

In the same way, we must take Jesus and offer His blood as our sacrifice to pass from death to life and have that peace that passes understanding.

Isaiah 53:10 says, "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand."

Notice the prayer the sailors uttered as they offered Jonah to the raging elements.

"Wherefore they cried unto the LORD, and said, We beseech thee, O LORD, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for thou, O LORD, hast done as it pleased thee" (Jonah 1:14).

It is the innocent blood of Jesus that covers our sins (Revelation 7:14).

Now also notice the similarities between Jonah's prayer from the fish's stomach and the messianic prayer that David wrote regarding the sufferings of Jesus from the cross.

Jonah prayed: "For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me" (Jonah 2:3).

David prayed: "I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me" (Psalm 69:2).

Jonah prayed by faith from the bowels of the sea monster, believing the Lord could hear him despite the evidence of his senses—that he was hopelessly separated from God.

"Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple" (Jonah 2:4).

In like manner, when Jesus sensed the awful separation from His Father during His ordeal on the cross, He cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34).

Then by faith, Jesus reached up into the heavenly temple and prayed, "Father, into thy hands I commend [commit] my spirit" (Luke 23:46).

This was a tremendous act of faith.

Christ was bearing the incomprehensible guilt and sins of a lost world, and He felt the eternal and abysmal separation from His Father.

To Be Continued

ISSUE 078: Draw Nigh Unto Me Part 76

Issued: 2nd October 2018

Defaced - Week 68

God's Coming Spiritual Revolution - Part 15

So how do spiritual longings retard the growth of Spiritual Desire? (continued)

The Sign of Jonah - Part 5 of 6

By Doug Batchelor [Emphases added]

Ref: <https://www.amazingfacts.org/media-library/book/e/75/t/the-sign-of-jonah>

The Times of Jonah and Jesus

Many believe that the “sign of Jonah” was the three days and three nights.

But notice how in the parallel passage found in the Gospel of Luke that Jesus never even mentions the time period.

Rather, the emphasis of Christ is on the way His people rejected His ministry, preaching, and prophecy in contrast to the Ninevites, who received and repented at the preaching of Jonah.

Luke 11:29-32 records:

29 And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet.

30 For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation.

31 The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them: for she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.

32 The men of Nineve shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.

After Jonah came out of the water, it took him three days to reach Nineveh.

**He then entered the city one-half day’s journey, or 12 hours,
John 11:9 KJV**

9 Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world.

and preached that after 40 days, the city would be destroyed.

Jonah 3:3-4 KJV

3 So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey.

4 And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.

This same time sequence of three and one-half followed by 40 is found elsewhere in Scripture.

For example, Elijah hid for three and one-half years during the famine and then fled for 40 days from Jezebel.

Now catch this!

Just like Jonah, Jesus came up from the waters of baptism and preached to the Jews for three and one-half years, warning that in one generation (or 40 years), the city and Temple would be destroyed:

Matthew 12:41 KJV

41 The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.

Because the nation of Israel did not listen and repent, it was destroyed.

Only a small percentage of the Jewish people accepted Him and was ready.

Could this happen again to the Church at the time of His second coming?

Here is another example that Jonah was a sign, or type, of Christ:

Jonah’s first message to the Ninevites when he came from the water was one of warning, which called them to repentance.

This was also the first message of Jesus after His baptism.

From that time, Jesus began to preach “Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 4:17).

“I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3)

Jonah Was Resurrected

Jesus told us that He would be a sign to His generation in the same way that Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites:

Luke 11:30 KJV

30 For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation.

The principal sign of Jesus to His people was the resurrection.

John 2:18-21 KJV

18 Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?

19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?

21 But he spake of the temple of his body.

As Jonah went down the streets of Nineveh, he most likely shared with his audience the highlights of his adventure and his virtual resurrection.

No doubt Jonah, like Jesus, bore scars from his ordeal.

As he went preaching, his clothes may still have been covered with bits of dried seaweed, and his skin could very well have been scarred with bleached freckles, raw from the digestive juices of the sea monster.

Let’s face it, God had, in effect, raised Jonah from a certain death.

Today, every real Christian has, like Jonah, experienced a type of resurrection and new life.

Romans 6:4 KJV

4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

We are each called to go where God sends us—without consulting our fears—and to preach a message of mercy and warning.

Sadly, there are many in the world today, even in the church, who are turning away from these messages of warning.

They will not believe unless they see signs and wonders, healings and miracles.

The sign Jesus gave to His generation is still valid today.

For three days and nights, He took the punishment through suffering and the penalty through death.

Then He rose again from the jaws of the grave.

And most important, Jesus gave us His eternal Word to guide us to the kingdom.

Christ said,

“If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead” (Luke 16:31).

Jonah and the Nation of Israel

This study would not be complete without considering another dimension of Jonah's story.

Many scholars agree that Jonah is also a type of the nation of Israel.

God placed the nation of Israel in the Promised Land and located them at the very crossroads of the continents that they might be a beacon of truth—a nation of priests pointing the pagans that surrounded them to Jehovah.

“And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation” (Exodus 19:6 KJV).

Because of their refusal to preach to the heathen, God visited His people with captivity in Babylon.

Jonah became a captive because he refused to preach to the people of Nineveh.

Jonah was given another chance, and Israel was also granted emancipation from Babylon.

It is remarkable how in the story of Jonah, everyone seems to listen to God but Jonah.
To Be Continued

ISSUE 079: Draw Nigh Unto Me Part 77
Issued: 9th October 2018

Defaced - Week 69

God's Coming Spiritual Revolution - Part 16

So how do spiritual longings retard the growth of Spiritual Desire? (continued)

The Sign of Jonah - Part 6 of 6

By Doug Batchelor [Emphases added]

Ref: <https://www.amazingfacts.org/media-library/book/e/75/t/the-sign-of-jonah>

The sailors, the wind and waves, the fish, the Ninevites and their livestock, and even the gourd and the worm all obey God.

Everyone and thing obeys but stubborn Jonah, who is supposed to be a prophet of God and yet is the only one who rebels against the Word of the Lord!

One of the central teachings of Jesus and the apostles was that “many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.

But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth”

Matthew 8:11-12 KJV

11 And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.

12 But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Jonah seemed to resent that God heard the prayer of the pagans in Nineveh and forgave them.

Likewise, the Jews wanted to kill Jesus when He said that God hears the heathen's prayers

Luke 4:25-29 KJV

25 But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land;

26 *But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow.*
 27 *And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.*
 28 *And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath,*
 29 *And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong.*

Why is it that the Church, like ancient Israel, seems so blasé regarding the message of warning and love we have been given?

The world is yearning for truth; it's ready to listen.

Matthew 9:37 KJV

Mat 9:37 Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few;

The Church, like Jonah, is sleeping as the storm gathers strength.

The pagans sailors are praying, and Jonah is snoring.

The beggars lay at our gates, longing for a few crumbs of truth while the Church feasts, clad in purple.

Unless we rouse to our duty, judgment will certainly come!

Jonah Is a Symbol of the Lost

I want to conclude with the most basic yet most profound message found in Jonah's story.

Jonah's experience is a message to the lost and to the backslider.

The ones who have heard the Word of the Lord are to go east, but they turn from the will of God and head west, thinking they will find some peace from the convicting voice of the Spirit.

Of course, it is a ridiculous thought to think even for a moment that you can hide from God.

"Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?"

If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.

If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me"

Psalms 139:7-10 KJV

7 Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?

8 If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.

9 If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;

10 Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

The backslider may even sleep for a time bound for judgment, but a storm will come.

God sends the storm to save them.

It may come in the form of financial reverses or a health or family crisis, but a storm will come to get their attention.

One day, they will awake to find they are in the pig pen and come to their senses and pray.

They will make that journey to the Father's house, and as soon as He sees them approach, He will run to meet them.

James 4:8 KJV

8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.

The classic Moby Dick, by Herman Melville, has a chapter titled "The Sermon."

Within this compelling chapter, beautiful lyrics from an old English sailors hymn regard how God saves the lost the same way He saved Jonah.

**"The ribs and terrors in the whale,
Arched over me a dismal gloom,
While all God's sun-lit waves rolled by,
And lift me deepening down to doom.
"I saw the opening maw of hell,
With endless pains and sorrows there;
Which none but they that feel can tell -
Oh, I was plunging to despair.
"In black distress, I called my God,
When I could scarce believe him mine,
He bowed his ear to my complaints -
No more the whale did me confine.
With speed he flew to my relief,
As on a radiant dolphin borne;
Awful, yet bright, as lightning shone
The face of my Deliverer God.
"My song for ever shall record
That terrible, that joyful hour;
I give the glory to my God,
His all the mercy and the power."**

The message of Jonah is one of hope and salvation for the lost.

You may feel you have wandered too far from God for Him to hear your prayers.

But remember, if Jonah could catapult a successful prayer from the lowest and darkest place on earth to the Almighty in His Temple, you can as well!

"And the LORD spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land" (Jonah 2:10 KJV).

He not only gave Jonah another chance, but He had the sea monster beach himself to place Jonah on solid ground.

God is merciful!

You may feel your situation is bleak, but if God saved Jonah from his hopeless circumstances, He can surely deliver you.

Also remember, God saved Jonah and then gave him a job to do.

The Lord has a mission and ministry for everyone, including you.

We come to Jesus in the great invitation, then we go for Jesus in the great commission.

**Come to him now then say,
"Here am I Lord, send me"**

Isaiah 6:8 KJV

8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.

**The Sign of Jonah was written by:
DOUG BATCHELOR**

**ISSUE 080: Draw Nigh Unto Me Part 78
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Defaced - Week 70

God's Coming Spiritual Revolution - Part 17

So how do spiritual longings retard the growth of Spiritual Desire? (continued)

Jonah and the Art of Being Broken

by Irene Sun

Ref: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/jonah-art-of-being-broken/>

We teach our children many things.

We teach them to be strong, brave, and swift, yet patient, kind, and gentle.

Rarely do we teach them how to be broken.

Yet brokenness before the Lord is the fount of these very blessings.

Courage and meekness flow most generously from a broken and contrite heart.

A few years ago, I was a zealous collector of Jonah picture books from libraries all over Illinois.

The obsession began when I was searching for a faithful rendition for my children.

Among the few dozen books I acquired, nearly all of them claimed that Jonah prayed for forgiveness in the belly of the fish.

I found this interpretation a little unsettling.

In my readings of chapter two, taught by a few professors at my seminary, Jonah did not repent.

He did not even acknowledge that he had done anything wrong.

My obsession with picture books soon turned into an obsession with the book of Jonah.

I had the most difficult time understanding Jonah's prayer.

What am I missing?

Why do I not see words related to sin and repentance in his prayer?

Jonah was using verses and phrases from the Psalms.

Yet somehow his prayer had a different flavour.

After much wrestling, I discovered where I had gone wrong.

In order to understand Jonah's prayer, I must first understand the meaning of repentance.

Specifically, how repentance must arise from a broken and contrite heart.

But Jonah's heart was yet to be broken.

At the end of chapter one, Yahweh commanded a fish to swallow Jonah and delivered him from death.

***This came
after Jonah disregarded Yahweh's instruction to go to Nineveh,
after he refused to pray when the sailors cried out to their gods,
after he chose death over repentance,
after he asked the sailors to commit murder by throwing him overboard.***

In other words, God's rescue was pure mercy.

The only thing Jonah deserved was judgment, yet Yahweh saved his life.

In the belly of the fish, Jonah prayed to Yahweh, his God.

Woe Is Me

***Jonah began his prayer by quoting the first verse of Psalm 120, which reads,
"To Yahweh in my distress I called."***

Jonah, however, changed the order of the words.

***He prayed,
"I called from my distress to Yahweh" (Jonah 2:2).***

Jonah 2:2 KJV

2 And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice.

He moved Yahweh's name to the end of the phrase and his own action to the front.

Jonah was focused on himself and what he was doing.

A subtle change, but it initiates the tone and pattern for the rest of the chapter.

In Jonah's eyes, he was the one who approached Yahweh.

Jonah emphasized his "call," his "cry," and his "voice."

He believed that Yahweh had heard and answered him, and he was right.

Yet Jonah had neither answered nor heeded Yahweh's words when he was commanded to go to Nineveh.

The longest portion of Jonah's prayer was about his woes.

He told his story from bits and pieces of David's psalms of deliverance and laments (Psalms 5, 31, and 69).

These were David's prayers during seasons when he was pursued by his enemies.

But in his recitation, Jonah omitted the praises of Yahweh's steadfast love—the essential theme in these psalms.

Jonah accused God of throwing him into the deep.

But had not Jonah asked the sailors to cast him overboard?

Was he blaming God when he claimed that God's waves and God's billows passed over him?

He felt that he was “driven away” from God’s sight.

But was not Jonah the one who ran “from the presence of Yahweh”?

Jonah 1:2-3 KJV

2 Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me.

3 But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.

Great Is My Faithfulness

Jonah concluded his woes with Yahweh’s deliverance (2:6).

Jonah 2:6 KJV

6 I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God.

But he credited himself for God’s rescue: “I remembered the LORD, and my prayer came to you, into your holy temple” (2:7)

Jonah 2:7 KJV

7 When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple.

Jonah set himself apart from idol worshipers, those who forsook “their hope of steadfast love.”

In a way, he was right—the sailors were unlike Jonah.

In chapter one, they prayed and worshipped Yahweh and made sacrifices on their wrecked, emptied ship.

Here, in the belly of the fish, Jonah promised that he would offer sacrifices.

Jonah 2:2-9 KJV

2 And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice.

3 For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me.

4 Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple.

5 The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head.

6 I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God.

7 When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple.

8 They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy.

9 But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD.

Yet he continued to resist the command to go to Nineveh, because the Word of Yahweh had to come to Jonah—a second time (3:1).

Jonah 3:1 KJV

1 And the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time, saying,

Jonah’s prayer ended the same way it began.

Yahweh’s name was the last word of Jonah’s prayer.

Jonah's prayer captured what was true in his life: Jonah came first, Yahweh last.

God commanded the fish to vomit Jonah out.

The author could have used many other words.

The fish could have "spit out" Jonah, or Jonah could have "come out" of the fish, but "vomited" was deliberately chosen as the response of Yahweh.

Great Teacher

Yahweh gave us a great teacher in Jonah.

Jonah's unbrokenness evokes yet another psalm by David: Psalm 51.

Jonah 2 and Psalm 51 are two sides of the same coin.

Jonah helped us see our need to repent; David gave us the words to repent.

In Jonah's prayer, we smell the stench of a self-righteous prayer; we feel the vileness of ingratitude.

In David's prayer, we find solace in his grief. David was shattered by the evil he had done, and he pleaded before God for mercy and a new heart.

Together, Jonah and David compelled sinners to come.

On our knees with our faces to the ground, this is our proper place.

Here we are safe; here we receive true comfort.

By using themselves as wretched examples, they helped us see the wickedness of our hearts.

In making known their failures and utter unworthiness, they made known the steadfast love and faithfulness of Yahweh.

Guilt and remorse are weighty things, but they are not enough to break the prideful heart.

We are broken only by the steadfast love of Yahweh and the weight of his glory.

The broken and contrite heart is the work of the Holy Spirit.

For his prophet Jonah, Yahweh's mercy came crashing in by means of a fierce storm, a ravenous fish, and the fish's vomit—grace upon grace upon grace.

Therefore, as we teach our children about courage and meekness, we begin by teaching them about God.

We show them how to be broken by being broken.

Yahweh remembers his children.

He rescues sinners not because we said a prayer or quoted a few Bible verses.

He saves us because of his steadfast love and abundant mercy.

Yahweh delights not in empty promises of sacrifices, but in truth in the inward being.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; he will not despise a broken and a contrite heart.

